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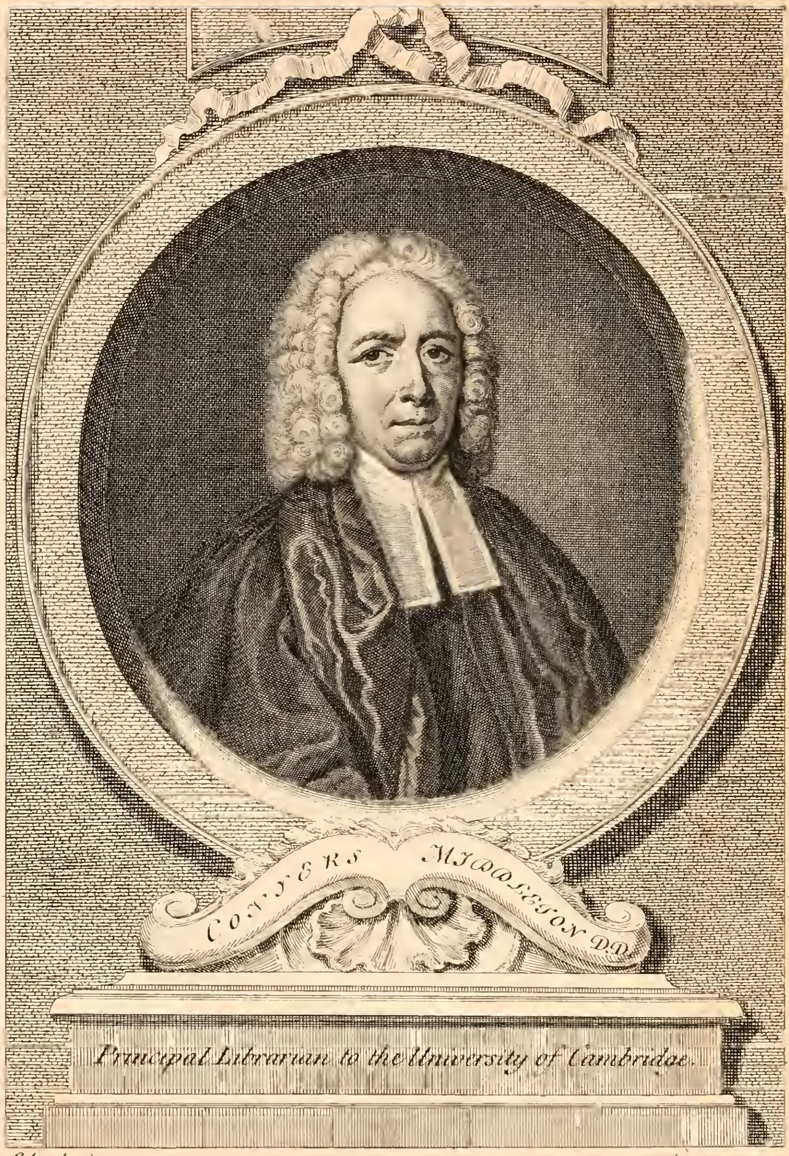

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Principal Librarian to the University of Cambridge.

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THE MISCELLANEOUS WORKS

Of the late Reverend and Learned

CONYERS MIDDLETON, D.D.

Principal Librarian of the Univerſity of *Cambridge.*

Containing all his

WRITINGS,

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In FOUR VOLUMES.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Reputation of Dr. *Middleton*'s Writings is ſo well eſtabliſhed in the World, that nothing needs be ſaid in favour of the preſent Collection of them into one Body, eſpecially as many of them were ſcarce poſſible to be procur'd. It were to be wiſhed, that he had purſued and completed the Deſign, which he had formed, of compoſing an exact Hiſtory of his Works, with the Occaſions and Circumſtances of them: In defect of which we can only ſubjoin a Catalogue of them in the Order, in which they were printed, after having premiſed a few Particulars concerning his Life, additional to thoſe pointed out by the Index under his Name.

He was Son of a Clergyman in *Yorkſhire*, poſſeſſed of an eaſy Fortune, beſides his Preferment in the Church; and was born at *Richmond*, in that County, on the 27th of *December* 1683. At ſeventeen Years of Age he was ſent to Trinity College in *Cambridge*, of which he afterwards was Fellow; quitting it upon his Marriage, when he was twenty-ſeven Years old, with Mrs. *Drake*, Daughter of Mr. *Morris* of *Oak-Morris* in *Kent*, and Widow of Counſellor *Drake* of *Cambridge*, a Lady of ample Fortune. After his Marriage he took a Living in the Gift of his Wife, but reſign'd it in about a Year.

His chief Reſidence for the reſt of his Life was at *Cambridge*, of which Univerſity he was choſen principal Library-Keeper, and held that Place till his Death. After the Deceaſe of his firſt Wife he travelled thro' *France* into *Italy*, and was at *Rome* in 1724. In *December* 1731 he was appointed Woodwardian Profeſſor; which Poſt he ſurrender'd in 1734, and ſoon after married *Mary*, Daughter of the Rev^d^ Mr. *Conyers Place* of *Dorcheſter*; and upon her Death his third Wife, *Anne*, the Daughter of *John Powell*, Eſq; of *Boughroya* in the County of *Radnor*, in *North-Wales*. He accepted a Living from Sir *John Frederick*, Bart. not long before his Death, which was occaſioned by a ſlow hectic Fever, and Diſorder in his Liver, on the 28th of *July* 1750, in the 67th Year of his Age, at *Hilderſham* in *Cambridgeſhire*, an Eſtate of his own purchaſing.

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A Catalogue of Dr. Middleton's Works, in the Order in which they were publiſh'd.

1719.

A Full and impartial Account of all the late Proceedings in the Univerſity of Cambridge againſt Dr. Bentley, 8vo.

A ſecond Part of the Full and impartial Account of all the late Proceedings, &c. 8vo.

Some Remarks upon a Pamphlet, intitled, The Caſe of Dr. Bentley farther ſtated and vindicated, *wherein the Merit of the Author and his Performance, and the Complaint of Proctor Laughton, are briefly conſidered,* 8vo.

A true Account of the preſent State of Trinity College in Cambridge, under the oppreſſive Government of their Maſter Richard Bentley, late D. D. 8vo.

1721.

Remarks, Paragraph by Paragraph, upon the Propoſals lately publiſhed by Richard Bentley, for a new Edition of the Greek Teſtament and Latin Verſion, London, in 4to.

Some farther Remarks, Paragraph by Paragraph, upon Propoſals lately publiſhed for a new Edition of a Greek and Latin Teſtament, by Richard Bentley, containing a full Anſwer to the Editor's late Defence of his ſaid Propoſals, as well as to all his Objections there made againſt my former Remarks, London, in 4to.

1723.

Bibliothecæ Cantabrigienſis ordinandæ Methodus quædam, quam Domino Procancellario Senatuique Academico conſiderandam & perficiendam officii & Pictatio ergo proponit. Cambridge, in 4to.

1726.

De Medicorum apud veteres Romanos degentium conditione Diſſertatio; quâ contra Viros celeberrimos Jac. Sponium & Rich. Meadium, M. D. D. ſervilem atque ignobilem eam fuiſſe oſtenditur. Cambridge, 4to.

1727.

Diſſertationis de Medicorum Romæ degentium conditione ignobili

&

& ſervili, contra anonymos quoſdam Notarum brevium, Reſponſionis, *atque* Animadverſionis *Auctores Defenſio. Pars prima. Cambridge,* 4to.

1729.

A Letter from Rome, ſhewing an exact Conformity between Popery and Paganiſm: or the Religion of the preſent Romans derived from that of their Heathen Anceſtors. London, 4to. *publiſhed in May,* 1729. *The fourth Edition was publiſhed at London,* 1741, *in* 8vo. *with a* prefatory Diſcourſe *and* Poſtſcript.

1731.

A Letter to Dr. Waterland; containing ſome Remarks on his Vindication of Scripture; *in anſwer to a Book, intitled,* Chriſtianity as old as the Creation. *Together with the Sketch or Plan of another Anſwer to the ſaid Book. London,* 8vo. *publiſhed in December* 1730.

A Defence of the Letter to Dr. *Waterland, againſt the falſe and frivolous Cavils of the Author of the* Reply. *London,* 8vo. *publiſhed November,* 1731.

1732.

Some farther Remarks on a Reply *to the* Defence *of the* Letter to Dr. *Waterland: Wherein the Author's Sentiments, as to all the principal Points in Diſpute, are fully and clearly explained in the manner, that has been promiſed. London,* 8vo. *publiſh'd April* 1732.

Oratio de novo Phyſiologiæ explicandæ munere ex celeberrimi Woodwardi Teſtamento inſtituto: habita Cantabrigiæ in Scholis publicis. Cambridge, in 4to. *publiſh'd in July,* 1732.

1733.

Remarks on ſome Obſervations *addreſs'd to the Author of the* Letter to Dr. *Waterland. By the Author of the Letter. London,* 8vo. *publiſh'd in May,* 1733.

1735.

A Diſſertation concerning the Origin of Printing in England: Shewing,

Shewing, that it was firſt introduced and practiſed by our Countryman William Caxton, at Weſtminſter, and not, as is commonly believed, by a foreign Printer at Oxford. Cambridge, 4to. *publiſh'd in Feb.* 1734-5.

1741.

The Hiſtory of the Life of M. Tullius Cicero. London, 2 *Volumes,* 4to.

1743.

The Epiſtles of M. T. Cicero to M. Brutus, and of Brutus to Cicero: With the Latin Text in the oppoſite Page, and Engliſh Notes to each Epiſtle: Together with a prefatory Diſſertation, in which the Authority of the ſaid Epiſtles is vindicated, and all the Objections of the Revd. Mr. Tunſtall *particularly conſidered and confuted. London,* 8vo. *publiſh'd in November,* 1742.

1745.

Germana quædam Antiquitatis eruditæ Monumenta, &c. London, 4to.

1747.

A Treatiſe on the Roman Senate, London, 8vo. *publiſh'd in March* 1746-7.

An Introductory Diſcourſe to a larger Work, deſigned hereafter to be publiſhed, concerning the miraculous Powers, which are ſuppoſed to have ſubſiſted in the Chriſtian Church from the earlieſt Ages, through ſeveral ſucceſſive Centuries; tending to ſhew, that we have no ſufficicent Reaſon to believe upon the Authority of the primitive Fathers, that any ſuch Powers were continued to the Church after the Days of the Apoſtles. With a Poſtſcript, containing ſome Remarks on an Archidiaconal Charge, delivered laſt Summer by the Revd. Dr. Chapman to the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of Sudbury. London, 4to. *publiſh'd in April* 1747.

1748.

Remarks on two Pamphlets lately publiſh'd againſt Dr. Middleton's Introductory Diſcourſe. *London,* 8vo.

1749.

A Free Inquiry into the miraculous Powers, which are ſuppoſed to have ſubſiſted in the Chriſtian Church from the earlieſt Ages, through ſeveral ſucceſſive Centuries. London, 4to. *publiſh'd in December* 1748.

1750.

An Examination of the Lord Biſhop of London's Diſcourſes concerning the Uſe and Intent of Prophecy; *with ſome curſory Animadverſions on his late* Appendix, *or* Additional Diſſertation, *containing a farther Inquiry into the Moſaic Account of the Fall. London*, 8vo. *publiſh'd in January* 1749-50.

POSTHUMOUS.

A Vindication of the Free Inquiry *into the miraculous Powers, which are ſuppoſed to have ſubſiſted in the Chriſtian Church, &c. from the Objections of Dr.* Dodwell *and Dr.* Church. *London* 1751.

Theſe now firſt publiſh'd,

A Preface to an intended Anſwer to all the Objections made againſt the Free Inquiry.

Some Curſory Reflections on the Diſpute or Diſſenſion, which happened at Antioch, between the Apoſtles Peter and Paul.

Reflections on the Variations, or Inconſiſtencies, which are found among the four Evangeliſts in their different Accounts of the ſame Facts.

An Eſſay on the Gift of Tongues, tending to explain the proper Notion and Nature of it, as it is deſcribed and delivered to us in the Sacred Scriptures. And as it appears alſo to have been underſtood by the Learned both of the ancient and modern Times.

Some ſhort Remarks on a Story told by the Ancients, concerning St. John the Evangeliſt, and Cerinthus the Heretic; and on the uſe, which is made of it by the Moderns, to enforce the Duty of ſhunning Heretics.

An Eſſay on the Allegorical and Literal Interpretation of the Creation and Fall of Man.

De Latinarum Literarum Pronunciatione Diſſertatio.

Dr. Middleton's Letters to Mr. Warburton, &c.

A

FREE INQUIRY

INTO THE

MIRACULOUS POWERS,

Which are ſuppoſed to have ſubſiſted in the

CHRISTIAN CHURCH,

From the EARLIEST AGES through ſeveral ſucceſſive CENTURIES.

By which it is ſhewn,

That we have no ſufficient Reaſon to believe, upon the Authority of the PRIMITIVE FATHERS,

That any ſuch Powers were continued to the CHURCH, after the Days of the APOSTLES.

PRÆFACE.

WHEN I firſt ſent abroad my *Introductory Diſcourſe*, this larger work, which I then promiſed, and now offer to the public, was actually prepared, and intended to have been publiſhed at the ſame time and in the ſame form, in which it now appears, with that Diſcourſe prefixed to it. But when I recollected the great importance of the ſubject, which had never before been profeſſedly examined; and that the part eſpecially, which I had undertaken to defend, was not onely new, but contradictory to the general opinion, which prevails among Chriſtians; and above all, that I had nothing to truſt to in the management of it, but my own private judgement; I began to think it a duty, which candor and prudence preſcribed, not to alarm the public at once with an argument ſo ſtrange and ſo little underſtood; nor to hazard an experiment ſo big with conſequences, till I had firſt given out ſome ſketch or general plan of what I was projecting; ſo that all, who were diſpoſed to examine it, might have notice and leiſure, to inquire into the grounds of it, and qualify themſelves to form a proper judgement of that evidence, which I might afterwards produce in its defence. I was in hopes alſo, by this method, of reaping ſome benefit to myſelf, from the opportunity, which it would give, not onely of drawing out other people's ſentiments, but, if any juſt cauſe ſhould be offered, of changing even my own; while I kept it ſtill in my power, either to drop the purſuit of my ſcheme, or to reform it, in ſuch a manner, as any new light or better information might happen to direct me.

This was my view, in publiſhing a ſeparate edition of the *Introductory Diſcourſe:* which, as I eaſily foreſaw, was ſure to encounter all the oppoſition, that prejudice, bigottry, and ſuperſtition are ever prepared to give to all free inquiries into opinions, which depend on the prevalence of their power. I was aware, that the very novelty of it would offend, and the matter of it ſtill more: that many would riſe up againſt it, and ſome of them by writing, others, by noiſe and clamor, try to raiſe a popular odium upon it; but my comfort was, that this would excite the candid inquirers alſo, to take it into their conſideration, and to weigh the merit and conſequences of it; and it was the judgement of theſe alone, by which I propoſed to determine my future meaſures and reſolution with regard to it.

The event has anſwered, not onely to my expectation, but to my wiſhes: for notwithſtanding all, which has been publiſhed againſt it, from the Preſs, the Pulpit and the Theological Schools, the general approbation, which it has every where received from thoſe, whoſe authority I chiefly value, has given me the utmoſt encouragement to perſevere in the proſecution of my argument, as being of the greateſt importance to the Proteſtant religion, and the ſole expedient, which can effectually ſecure it, from being gradually undermined, and finally ſubverted by the efforts of *Rome.*

But beſides the favorable reception, which it has met with both among the Clergy and the Layety, it was an unexpected ſatisfaction to me, to be informed lately by a friend, that Mr. *Lock* had many years ago declared the ſame opinion with mine, concerning *the miracles of the Primitive Church*, in a paragraph of his *third Letter on Toleration*; which I had never read or ſeen, but ſhall now offer to the reader in his own words; being perſuaded, that the authority of ſo eminent a writer, and ſo ſingularly qualified by his talents and ſtudies, to diſcern the exact relations and conſequences of things, will add great weight and confirmation to the cauſe, which I am here defending.

Mr Lock's opinion.

" And ſo I leave you, ſays Mr. *Lock* to his Antagoniſt, " to " diſpoſe of the credit of Eccleſiaſtical writers, as you ſhall " think fit, and by your authority, to eſtabliſh or invalidate " theirs, as you pleaſe. But this, I think, is evident, that he, " who will build his faith or reaſonings upon miracles de- " livered by Church-Hiſtorians, *will find cauſe to go farther than* " *the Apoſtles time, or elſe, not to ſtop at* Conſtantin's*:* ſince the " writers after that period, whoſe word we take, as unqueſti- " onable in other things, ſpeak of miracles in their time with " no leſs aſſurance, than the Fathers before the fourth cen- " tury: and a great part of the miracles of the ſecond and " third centuries ſtand upon the credit of the writers of the " fourth. So that, that ſort of argument, which takes and " rejects the teſtimony of the ancients at pleaſure, as it may " beſt ſuit with it, will not have much force with thoſe, who " are not diſpoſed to embrace the hypotheſis, without any ar- " guments at all [1]."

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[1] See Let. 3d. on Tolerat. c. x. p. 269.

As to the writers, who have hitherto declared themſelves againſt this opinion, ſignified here in ſhort by Mr. *Lock*, and explaned at large by myſelf, they have ſhewn a great eagerneſs indeed, to diſtinguiſh their zeal, but a very little knowledge of the quæſtion, which they have undertaken to diſcuſs; urged by the hopes of thoſe honors, which they have ſeen others acquire, by former attacks upon me; and, like true ſoldiers of the militant Church, prepared to fight for every eſtabliſhment, that offers ſuch pay and rewards to its defenders. Who, from a blind deference to authority, think the credibility of a witneſs ſufficient, to evince the certainty of all facts indifferently, whether natural or ſupernatural, probable or improbable; and knowing no diſtinction between faith and credulity, take a facility of believing, to be the ſureſt mark of a ſound Chriſtian. Their arguments are conformable to their principles: for inſtead of entring into the merits of the cauſe, and ſhewing my opinion to be falſe or contradictory to any truth ſubſiſting in the world, they think it a full confutation of it, to prove it contrary to the belief of the primitive ages, to the teſtimony of the ancient Fathers, and to the tradition of the Catholic Church: by the help of which venerable names, they inſinuate fears and jealouſies, of I know not what conſequences, dangerous to Chriſtianity, ruinous to the faith of Hiſtory, and introductive of an univerſal Scepticiſm. Terrors purely imaginary; grounded on error and prejudice; which if ſuffered to prevail, would produce conſequences much more to be dreaded; ſubverſive of all true Religion as well as of every thing elſe, that is rational and virtuous among men. But after all their invectives, it is a pleaſure to find them obliged, in the courſe of the debate, to confute their own clamors; and to declare at laſt with me, that, whatever be the fate of my argument, or were it allowed even to be true, the credit of the Goſpel-miracles could not in any degree be ſhaken by it [1].

But to ſpeak my mind freely on the ſubject of conſequences. I am not ſo ſcrupulous perhaps in my regard to them, as many of my profeſſion are apt to be: my nature is frank and open, and warmly diſpoſed, not onely to ſeek, but to ſpeak what I take to be true, which diſpoſition has been greatly confirmed by the ſituation, into which Providence has thrown me. For I was never trained to pace in the trammels of the Church, nor tempted by the ſweets of it's preferments, to ſacrifice the philoſophic freedom of a ſtudious, to the ſervile reſtraints of an ambitious life: and from this very circumſtance, as often as I reflect upon it, I feel that comfort in my own breaſt, which no external honors can beſtow. I perſuade myſelf, that the life and faculties of man, at the beſt but ſhort and limited, cannot be employed more rationally or laudably, than in the ſearch of knowledge; and eſpecially of that ſort, which relates to our duty, and conduces to our happineſs. In theſe Inquiries therefore, wherever I perceive any glimmering of truth before me; I readily purſue, and endeavour to trace it to it's ſource; without any reſerve or caution of puſhing the diſcovery too far, or opening too great a glare of it to the public. I look upon the diſcovery of any thing which is true, as a valuable acquiſition to ſociety; which cannot poſſibly hurt, or obſtruct the good effect of any other truth whatſoever: for they all partake of one common eſſence, and neceſſarily coincide with each other; and like the drops of rain, which fall ſeparately into the river, mix themſelves at once with the ſtream, and ſtrengthen the general current.

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[1] See Remarks on two Pamphlets againſt the Introd. Diſ. p. 8, 9.

The light of truth indeed is ſure to expoſe the vanity of all thoſe popular ſyſtems and prejudices, which are to be found in every country; derived originally from error, fraud, or ſuperſtition; and craftily impoſed upon the many, to ſerve the intereſts of a few. Hence it is, that upon the detection of any of theſe, and eſpecially of the religious kind, we ſee all that rage of fierce Bigots, hypocritical Zealots, and intereſted Politicians; and of all whoſe credit or fortunes in any manner depend on the eſtabliſhment of error and ignorance among men: and hence, all thoſe horrible maſſacres and perſecutions, of which we frequently read, both in Pagan and Chriſtian Countries, which, under the pretext of ſerving God, have deſtroyed ſo many thouſands of his beſt ſervants. But truth was never known to be on the perſecuting ſide, or to have had any other effect, than to promote the general good, and to co-operate with Heaven itſelf, in bringing us ſtill nearer to the perfection of our being, and to the knowledge of that eternal rule of good and ill, which God originally marked out and preſcribed to the nature of man. Let the conſequences then of truth reach as far as they can; the farther they reach the better; the more errors they will detect, and the more they will diſſipate of thoſe clouds and miſts, in which the crafty and intereſted part of mankind art apt to involve and diſguiſe the real nature of things, from the view of their fellow creatures.

Eternal Rule.

The preſent quæſtion, concerning the reality of the miraculous powers of the primitive Church, depends on the joint credibility of the facts, pretended to have been produced by thoſe powers, and of the witneſſes, who atteſt them. If either part be infirm, their credit muſt ſink in proportion; and if the facts eſpecially be incredible, muſt of courſe fall to the ground: becauſe no force of teſtimony can alter the nature of things. The credibility of facts lies open to the trial of our reaſon and ſenſes, but the credibility of witneſſes depends on a variety of principles, wholly conceled from us; and tho', in many caſes, it may reaſonably be preſumed, yet in none, can it certainly he known. For it is common with men, out of crafty and ſelfiſh views, to diſſemble and deceive; or, out of weakneſs and credulity, to embrace and defend with zeal, what the craft of others had impoſed upon them: but plain facts cannot delude us; cannot ſpeak any other language, or give any other information, but what flows from nature and truth. The teſtimony therefore of facts, as it is offered to our ſenſes, in this wonderfull fabric and conſtitution of worldly things, may properly be called the teſtimony of God himſelf; as it carries with it the ſureſt inſtruction in all caſes, and to all nations, which in the ordinary courſe of his providence he has thought fit to appoint for the guidance of human life.

Facts and Witneſses must both be credible.

But before we procede, to examine the particular facts and teſtimonies, which antiquity has furniſhed for the deciſion of this diſpute, our firſt care ſhould be, to inform ourſelves of the proper nature and condition of thoſe miraculous powers, which are the ſubject of it, as they are repreſented to us in the hiſtory of the Goſpel: for till we have learnt from thoſe ſacred records, what they really were, for what purpoſes granted, and in what manner exerted by the Apoſtles and firſt poſſeſſors of them, we cannot form a proper judgement on thoſe evidences, which are brought either to confirm or confute their continuance in the Church, and muſt diſpute conſequently at random, as chance or prejudice may prompt us, about things unknown to us.

And this indeed appears to be the caſe of all theſe zealous Champions, who have attempted to refute the *Introductory Diſcourſe*. Among whom, I have not obſerved one, who ſeems to have ſpent a thought, in conſidering the origin and uſe of thoſe powers, as they are ſet forth in the New Teſtament. They appeal indeed to the Texts, in which they were promiſed by our Lord to his Diſciples: where tho' there is not the leaſt hint of any particular time, for which they were to laſt, yet this they ſupply from their own imagination, and by the help of a poſtulatum, which all people will grant, *that they continued as long, as they were neceſſary to the Church*, they preſently extend that neceſſity to what length they pleaſe, or as far as they find it agreeable to the ſeveral ſyſtems, which they had previouſly entertained about them.

They urge eſpecially that paſſage from St. *Mark*, in which our Lord, juſt ready to aſcend into Heaven, and giving his laſt inſtructions to his Apoſtles, *to go and preach to all nations*, immediately adds; *And theſe ſigns ſhall follow them who believe: in my name they ſhall caſt out Devils; they ſhall ſpeak with new tongues; they ſhall take up ſerpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it ſhall not hurt them; they ſhall lay hands on the ſick, and they ſhall recover* [1].

Mark 16.17.

From theſe words, one of my Antagoniſts argues thus:

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[1] Mark XVI. 17.

"It will here be obſerved, that this promiſe was not made to "the Apoſtles perſonally, but to them, that ſhould believe "through their preaching, without any limitation of time for "the continuance of theſe powers to their days. And when "it is conſidered how great a part of the Heathen world re-"mained unconverted after their days, it is no unreaſonable "ſuppoſition, that theſe powers did not expire with the A-"poſtles, but were continued to their Succeſſors, in the work "of propagating the Goſpel. How long, I ſay not: and per-"haps there is not light enough in hiſtory, to ſettle this point; "as indeed it nothing concerns us. But the earlieſt Fathers "unanimouſly affirm, that theſe powers ſubſiſted in the Church "in their days; and why they are not to be believed, it is the "Author's buſineſs to ſhew [1].

Another Advocate of the ſame cauſe makes the following remark on the ſame paſſage. "Our Saviour, before he left "the world, promiſes theſe miraculous powers not onely to "the Apoſtles, but to private Chriſtians: and the rules and "directions, which St. *Paul* afterwards gave the *Corinthians*, "concerning the exerciſe of them, plainly ſhew, that they "muſt have continued ſome conſiderable time in the Church. "And as Chriſt's promiſe is without any limitation of time, "we may reaſonably ſuppoſe that they laſted as long as the "Church had an immediate occaſion for them, ſuch as the "farther converſion of the world."—For which purpoſe of converting thoſe nations, who had not as yet heard of the Goſpel, he declares it, "to be neceſſary, that the Succeſſors of the "Apoſtles ſhould be indued with miraculous powers, eſpecially

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[1] See Obſervat. on the Introd. Diſc. p. 25.

" with *the gift of tongues,* without which they could not expect,
" any conſiderable ſucceſs—and he concludes therefore, " that
" it is highly probable, if not abſolutely certain, that they
" did actually ſubſiſt in the Church for ſome conſiderable
" time, after the days of the Apoſtles [1]."

It being agreed then, that in the original promiſe of theſe miraculous gifts, there is no intimation of any particular period, to which their continuance was limited, the next quæſtion is, by what ſort of evidence the preciſe time of their duration is to be determined? But to this point one of the writers juſt referred to, excuſes himſelf, as we have ſeen, from giving any anſwer; and thinks it ſufficient to declare in general, that *the earlieſt Fathers unanimouſly affirm them to have continued down to their times.* Yet he has not told us, as he ought to have done, to what age he limits the character of *the earlieſt Fathers;* whether to the ſecond or to the third century, or, with the generality of our writers, means alſo to include the 4th. But to whatever age he may reſtrain it, the difficulty at laſt will be, to aſſign a reaſon, why we muſt needs ſtop there. In the mean while, by his appealing thus to the *earlieſt Fathers* onely, as unanimous on this article, a common reader would be apt to infer, that the later Fathers are more cold or diffident, or divided upon it; whereas the reverſe of this is true, and the more we deſcend from thoſe earlieſt Fathers, the more ſtrong and explicit we find their Succeſſors, in atteſting the perpetual ſucceſſion and daily exertion of the ſame miraculous powers, in their ſeveral ages: ſo that if the cauſe muſt be determined by *the unanimous conſent of Fathers,* we ſhall find as much reaſon to

Earliest Fathers
who?
1.2.3. and 4th Cent:

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[1] See Poſtſcript of a Treatiſe on Mirac. by Abr. Lemoine. p. 511, 512, 515.

believe, that thoſe powers were continued even to the lateſt ages, as to any other, how early and primitive ſoever, after the days of the Apoſtles.

But the ſame writer gives us two reaſons, why he does not chuſe to ſay any thing upon the ſubject of their duration: 1ſt, becauſe, *there is not light enough in hiſtory, to ſettle it:* 2dly, becauſe, *the thing itſelf is of no concern to us.*

As to his firſt reaſon, I am at a loſs to conceive, what farther light a profeſſed Advocate of the primitive ages and Fathers can poſſibly require in this caſe. For as far as the Church-Hiſtorians can illuſtrate or throw light upon any thing, there is not a ſingle point in all hiſtory, ſo conſtantly, explicitely and unanimouſly affirmed by them all, as the continual ſucceſſion of theſe powers through all ages, from the earlieſt Father, who firſt mentions them, down to the time of the Reformation. Which ſame ſucceſſion is ſtill farther deduced, by perſons of the moſt eminent character, for their probity, learning, and dignity in the *Romiſh* Church, to this very day. So that the onely doubt, which can remain with us, is; whether the Church-Hiſtorians are to be truſted or not: for if any credit be due to them in the preſent caſe, it muſt reach either to all, or to none: becauſe the reaſon of believing them in any one age, will be found to be of equal force in all, as far as it depends on the characters of the perſons atteſting, or the nature of the things atteſted.

Church historians unanimous down to the reformation.

The ſecond reaſon is ſtill more curious; *that the point of their duration is of no concern to us.* This indeed is ſtrange, from a writer of his principles; for if primitive antiquity, as all theſe champions contend, is to be the rule, of regulating the doctrines and diſcipline of all modern Churches, it muſt ſurely be of the utmoſt concern to us to know, how far it's authority may be truſted, and how far the hand of God continued to cooperate viſibly with the ſaints of thoſe ages, by giving a divine ſanction to the doctrines, which they taught, and the rites, which they eſtabliſhed. For that God did actually exert himſelf in ſuch an extraordinary manner, in thoſe primitive days, this writer affirms from the unanimous teſtimony of *the earlieſt Fathers*; yet owns withal, that the ſame ages were impoſed upon alſo by falſe and fictitious pretenſions to miraculous powers. As far therefore, as it is our duty, to conform ourſelves to the doctrines and uſages of thoſe early ages, ſo far it muſt be of great importance, to have a rule of diſtinguiſhing the true from the falſe; of diſcerning thoſe, which God had ſtamped with his authority for the common good of mankind, from thoſe, which fraud and craft had impoſed, for the private intereſt of a few Impoſtors: towards which, nothing could afford more light and help to us, than to know the preciſe duration of true miracles, and to be able to pronounce, that they proceeded thus far and no farther. On my part indeed, it might very conſiſtently be ſaid, that it is of no uſe to inquire or diſpute how long thoſe powers ſubſiſted, ſince, according to my principles, they never ſubſiſted at all, after the days of the Apoſtles: but when a writer affirms the Primitive Church to be a guide to us, and to have been indued with miraculous powers, for the confirmation of it's divine authority, yet declares it of *no concern to us*, to know, how long thoſe powers continued in it, or at what time God was pleaſed to withdraw them, on account of the prevailing corruptions and forgeries of the ſame Church, he acts not onely in contradiction to his own principles,

ples, but to reaſon and common ſenſe, and betrays a great want either of judgement or ſincerity.

The argument alſo, which theſe writers alledge for the continuance of miracles, and eſpecially *of the gift of tongues, from the unconverted ſtate of the Heathen world,* is not leſs impertinent and injudicious: becauſe it might have been alledged as juſtly and with equal force, through all ages of the Church, from the Apoſtolic times down to our own; and will juſtify the Romaniſts themſelves in their pretenſions to the ſame powers at this very day: ſince the greateſt part of this habitable Globe remains ſtill in the ſame *unconverted ſtate*; immerſed in groſs idolatry; without any knowledge of the true God, or light of the Goſpel among them.

Tongues.

But in truth, this ſame conſideration, *of the unconverted ſtate of the Heathens,* was thought to have ſo much weight in it by *Grotius,* as to perſuade him from a parity, both of reaſon, and of evidence alſo, which was found in every age, that theſe extraordinary gifts were certainly continued to the later, as well as to the earlier times of the Church. Nay, he took the converſion of the Heathens, to be an occaſion ſo worthy of the divine interpoſition, as not to doubt, he ſays, but, that *if any perſon were employed in it at this day, in a manner agreeable to the will of our Lord, he would find himſelf indued with a power of working miracles* [1]. From which declaration, of ſo learned and judicious a Critic, we may obſerve in the firſt place, what I

Grotius was a Shaking quaker.

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[1] Cum vero multo etiam ſeriora ſecula plena ſint teſtimoniis ejus rei, neſcio qua ratione moti quidam id donum ad prima tantum tempora reſtringant.——Quare ſiquis nunc etiam Gentibus Chriſti ignaris——Chriſtum, ita ut ipſe annunciari voluit, annunciet, promiſſionis vim duraturam non dubito. In Mrac. xvi. 17.

have elſewhere frequently ſignified; how naturally the allowance of thoſe powers to the earlier ages, will engage us, if we are conſiſtent with ourſelves, to allow the ſame alſo to the later ages: and, in the ſecond place, how fallacious the judgement even of the wiſeſt will ever be found, when deſerting the path of nature and experience, and giving the reins to fancy and conjecture, they attempt to illuſtrate the ſecret counſils of Providence.

For experience has long taught us, that tho' all the different Churches and Sects of Chriſtians, have ſent abroad their ſeveral Miſſionaries, to propagate the Goſpel among the remote and Idolatrous nations, yet none of them have ever been inabled to work a ſingle miracle in confirmation of their miſſion. The Romaniſts indeed make a pretenſion to ſuch a power, and boaſt of ſeveral miracles performed by their Miſſionaries in both the *Indies:* yet, as I have elſewhere obſerved, one of their graveſt writers has openly acknowledged the vanity of ſuch Pretenſions; and one of their moſt eminent wonder-workers, St. *Francis Xavier*, called the *Apoſtle of the Indies*, laments in ſome of his letters, "that through his ignorance of the lan-
"guage of thoſe nations, he found himſelf incapable of do-
"ing any ſervice to the Chriſtian cauſe, and was but little bet-
"ter than a mute Statue among them, till he could acquire
"ſome competent knowledge of it: for which purpoſe, he
"was forced to act the boy again, and apply himſelf to the
"taſk of learning the rudiments of it [1]."

St. Francis Xavier.

Now this *gift of tongues* is what the adverſaries of my ſcheme lay the greateſt ſtreſs upon. They declare it to be ſo peculiarly neceſſary to the propagation of the Goſpel, that no conſiderable ſucceſs could be expected without it; and from this neceſſity infer the certainty of it's continuance after the days of the Apoſtles. But they will have the mortification to find, in the ſequel of this work, their imaginary hypotheſis effectually confuted by the evidence of real fact; and this very gift, of whoſe continuance they are ſo aſſured, to have been of all others, the moſt evidently and confeſſedly withdrawn, in the earlieſt ages of the Church. They will find, I ſay, that the ſingle Father, who lays any claim to it, and one of the graveſt and moſt venerable of them all, laments, like the *Romiſh Apoſtle of the* Indies, *his own want of it, in the work of propagating the Goſpel among a rude and barbarous people:* and that, in all the ſucceding ages, while all the other kinds of miraculous gifts are frequently celebrated, and affirmed to floriſh ſtill in great abundance, there is not a ſingle inſtance to be met with of this, nor the leaſt pretenſion made to it by any writer whatſoever.

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[1] See Præfat. Diſc. to my Letter from *Rome*, p. 99.

From this fact, and many more of the ſame ſort, which might be produced, the reader will obſerve, how raſh and preſumptuous it is, to form arguments ſo peremptorily upon the ſuppoſed neceſſity or propriety of a divine interpoſition, in this or that particular caſe; and to decide upon the views and motives of the Deity, by the narrow conceptions of human reaſon. Whereas the whole, which the wit of man can poſſibly diſcover, either of the ways or will of the Creator, muſt be acquired by a contrary method; not by imagining vainly within ourſelves, what may be proper or improper for him to do; but by looking abroad, and contemplating, what he has actually done; and attending ſeriouſly to that revelation, which he made of himſelf from the beginning, and placed continually before our eyes, in the wonderfull works, and beautifull fabric of this viſible world.

There is another miſtake, which is common to all theſe advocates of the primitive miracles, and the chief ſource of their prejudices againſt *the Introductory Diſcourſe*; in taking it for granted, as they all do, that theſe miraculous powers, when they had once been conferred by our Lord, upon any of his Diſciples, were ever after perpetually inherent in them, and ready to be exerted at their will and pleaſure: whereas it is evident, from ſeveral inſtances, both of the collation and exerciſe of them, which we find in the New Teſtament, that they were merely temporary and occaſional; adapted to particular exigencies, thought worthy of them by our Lord; and imparted onely at the moment of their exertion, which, by ſome ſpecial impulſe, was notified at the ſame time to the agent; and as ſoon as thoſe particular occaſions were ſerved, that they were withdrawn again or ſuſpended, and the Agents reduced to the condition of all other men, and left to the guidance of their own natural prudence.

Occasional.

This, I ſay, is evident, from the account of theſe gifts and the effects of them, which is given to us in the Goſpel; as it has been obſerved alſo and declared by ſome of the beſt Expoſitors. Thus *Grotius*, in his comment on our Lord's promiſe of them to all true believers, remarks; *that theſe wonderfull faculties were ſeverally diſtributed to each faithful Diſciple, yet not ſo, as to be exerted of themſelves, or at pleaſure, but reſerved to ſpecial occaſions.*

ſions [1]. And the ſame thing is ſignified by our Lord himſelf, in his firſt promiſe of them to his Apoſtles, when he ſent them out, *two by two, to preach his Goſpel to the* Jews: on which occaſion he tells them, *that when they were brought before Governors and Kings, they ſhould not take any thought, about what they were to ſay for themſelves, for it would be given to them, in that very hour, what they ſhould ſpeak* [2]. And that it was not peculiar to the gift of language or tongues onely, to be given at the moment of it's exertion, but common likewiſe to all the reſt, will be ſhewn probably, on ſome other occaſion, more at large in a particular treatiſe, which is already prepared by me, on that ſubject.

As this then was the ſtate of thoſe extraordinary powers, with which our Lord thought fit, to arm his Apoſtles, againſt the firſt ſtruggles and difficulties of their miſſion; ſo in his more intimate converſations with them, we find him frequently inculcating as an eſſential qualification alſo for the ſame miſſion, the practice of all thoſe moral virtues, which are peculiarly adapted to conciliate the favor and good will of men: a general benevolence, modeſty, affability, gentleneſs of behaviour, with great circumſpection and caution of giving offence. *Behold,* ſays he, *I ſend ye forth as ſheep, in the midſt of wolves: be ye wiſe therefore as ſerpents, and harmleſs as doves* [3]: as if he meant to admoniſh them, that they were not to be perpetually directed by divine impulſes and inſpirations, but left on many occaſions to the ordinary direction of their own natural faculties: and

Benevolence, Modesty, Affability,
Gentleneſs. Caution.

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[1] Non omnibus omnia—ita tamen cuilibet, ut oportet, credenti aliqua tunc data ſit admirabilis facultas, quæ ſe non ſemper quidem, ſed data occaſione explicaret. In Mar. xvi. 17.

[2] Mar. x. 19.

[3] Mat. x. 16.

that their ſucceſs would depend as much on the purity of their lives, as the force of their wonderfull works: and that the miraculous gifts, which were indulged to them, in this infancy of the Goſpel, were intended to draw people's attention more ſtrongly to the contemplation of their manners; and to make them reflect on the excellency of that doctrine, which produced ſuch rare fruits, and offered ſuch examples of innocence and ſanctity, for the correction of a depraved and ſinfull world.

The writers however, of whom I am ſpeaking, prepoſſeſſed with the notion of the perpetual inherence of thoſe powers, in all, who had once been indued with them, harangue with great gayety on the folly, which they impute to me, of imagining, that they ſhould all be extinguiſhed in a moment, upon the death of the laſt of the Apoſtles. They obſerve, that St. *John* outlived all the reſt near forty years; and that ſome of the moſt eminent and gifted of the other Diſciples, who are mentioned in the Goſpel, ſurvived him alſo, and were employing themſelves, in different parts of the earth, in propagating the Goſpel, and working perpetual miracles for the converſion of Unbelievers; and it was incredible, that theſe powers, which they were exerting every hour, with ſuch ſucceſs and honor to the Chriſtian cauſe, in all the principal Cities and countries of the world, and at ſo wide a diſtance from each other, ſhould all fail them at once, and expire at that very inſtant, in which St. *John* happened to die at *Epheſus*.

But while they fancy themſelves, to be diſplaying the force of their reaſoning and eloquence, they are but expoſing their own ignorance, not onely of the nature of thoſe extraordinary powers, which are the ground of the diſpute, but of the particular quæſtion, againſt which they are diſputing. For it is no where affirmed in the *Introductory Diſcourſe*, as their way of arguing implies, that thoſe powers either vaniſhed inſtantaneouſly, upon the death of St. *John*; or ſubſiſted even ſo long, as St. *John* remained alive: but the ſingle point in diſpute, as far as it ariſes from that Diſcourſe, is, whether we have ſufficient ground to believe, upon the teſtimony of the ancient Fathers, that they ſubſiſted at all, after the days of the Apoſtles.

If the nature then of theſe powers be ſuch, as I have ſignified above, and ſhall endeavour hereafter to demonſtrate; and if what I am now diſputing with regard to the ſame powers, ſhould appear alſo to be true; ſome perhaps may be apt to demand, what it is, that we are to judge at laſt, concerning their real duration; and to what period we may reaſonably venture to reſtrain them. And tho' ſuch a demand be rather curious than pertinent, and the ſolution of it of no conſequence to the point in debate; yet as we cannot help forming ſome opinion or other on all ſubjects, which have fallen under our particular obſervation, ſo I ſhall not ſcruple to declare in this, what I take to be the moſt probable, as far as I have been able to collect it, from the facts and inſtances relating to it, which are to be found in the New Teſtament: but I propoſe it onely as a conjecture, which may excite others alſo, to ſearch, and to gueſs for themſelves, till they can hit upon ſomething more ſatisfactory. In the mean while, my opinion in ſhort is this; that in thoſe firſt efforts of planting the Goſpel, after our Lord's aſcenſion, the extraordinary gifts which he had promiſed, were poured out in the fulleſt meaſure on the Apoſtles, and thoſe other Diſciples, whom he had ordained to be the primary Inſtruments of that great work; in order to inable them, more eaſily to overrule the inveterate prejudices both of the Jews and Gentiles, and to bear up againſt the diſcouraging ſhocks of popular rage and perſecution, which they were taught to expect in this noviciate of their miniſtry. But in proceſs of time, when they had laid a foundation, ſufficient to ſuſtain the great fabrick deſigned to be erected upon it, and, by an invincible courage, had conquered the firſt and principal difficulties; and planted Churches in all the chief Cities of the *Roman* Empire, and ſettled a regular miniſtry to ſuccede them, in the government of the ſame; it may reaſonably be preſumed, that as the benefit of miraculous powers began to be leſs and leſs wanted, in proportion to the increaſe of thoſe Churches, ſo the uſe and exerciſe of them began gradually to decline; and as ſoon as Chriſtianity had gained an eſtabliſhment in every quarter of the known world, that they were finally withdrawn, and the Goſpel left to make the reſt of it's way, by it's own genuin ſtrength, and the natural force of thoſe divine graces, with which it was ſo richly ſtored, *faith*, *hope*, and *charity:* graces! which never fail to inſpire all, who truly poſſeſs them, with a zeal and courage, which no terrors can daunt, nor worldly powers ſubdue. And all this, as far as I am able to judge, from the nature of the gifts themſelves, and from the inſtances or effects of them, which I have any where obſerved, may probably be thought to have happened, while ſome of the Apoſtles were ſtill living: who, in the times even of the Goſpel, appear, on ſeveral occaſions, to have been deſtitute of any extraordinary gifts: and of whoſe miracles, when we go beyond the limits of the Goſpel, we meet with nothing in the later hiſtories, on which we can depend, or nothing rather, but what is apparently fabulous. And as to St.

John in particular, who ſurvived all the reſt, the whole, that is delivered of him with any probability, is, "that he ſpent "the laſt years of his life in writing his Goſpel and Revela-"tions, and in viſiting and confirming all thoſe Churches of "*Aſia*, which had been planted by himſelf and his brethren, "and were allotted to him, as his peculiar province [1]." But in the miraculous kind, the principal ſtory related of him, is, *that being thrown, by the command of* Domitian, *into a caldron of boiling oil, he came out ſafe and unhurt from it:* in memory of which, a chappel was afterwards built, and is ſtill remaining, at *the Latine Gate of* Old Rome; the ſpot, where the fact is ſuppoſed to have happened; in which I ſaw the ſtory of it repreſented in painting. Yet this, with a few other trifling tales, which are recorded of the ſame Apoſtle, may juſtly be conſidered, as the fiction of the later ages.

But to return once more to the ſubject of the following ſheets. The reader will find in them none of thoſe arts, which are commonly employed by diſputants, either to perplex a good cauſe, or to palliate a bad one; no ſubtil refinements, forced conſtructions, or evaſive diſtinctions; but plain reaſoning grounded on plain facts, and publiſhed with an honeſt and diſintereſted view, to free the minds of men from an inveterate impoſture, which, through a long ſucceſſion of ages, has diſgraced the religion of the Goſpel, and tyrannized over the reaſon and ſenſes of the Chriſtian world. In the purſuit of which end, I have ſhewn, by many indiſputable facts, that the ancient Fathers, by whoſe authority that deluſion was originally impoſed, and has ever ſince been ſupported, were extremely credulous and ſuperſtitious; poſſeſſed with ſtrong prejudices and an enthuſiaſtic zeal, in favor, not onely of Chriſtianity in general, but of every particular doctrine, which a wild imagination could ingraft upon it; and ſcrupling no art or means, by which they might propagate the ſame principles. In ſhort; that they were of a character, from which nothing could be expected, that was candid and impartial; nothing, but what a weak or crafty underſtanding could ſupply, towards confirming thoſe prejudices, with which they happened to be poſſeſſed; eſpecially where religion was the ſubject, which above all other motives, ſtrengthens every biaſs, and inflames every paſſion of the human mind. And that this was actually the caſe, I have ſhewn alſo by many inſtances; in which we find them roundly affirming as true, things evidently falſe and fictitious; in order to ſtrengthen, as they fancied, the evidences of the Goſpel; or to ſerve a preſent turn of confuting an adverſary; or of inforcing a particular point, which they were laboring to eſtabliſh.

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[1] Vid. Teſtimonia de Johanne, præfixa Evangelio ejus a Millio, in Editione N. T.

The chief inſtrument, by which they acquired and maintained their credit in the world, was an appeal to *a divine and miraculous power*, as reſiding continually among them, and giving teſtimony to the truth of what they taught and practiſed. This is the particular quæſtion, which I have undertaken here to examine: and, I perſuade myſelf, that, as far as a negative can be demonſtrated, I have proved all their appeals and poſitive atteſtations to be unworthy of any credit; mere words unſupported by facts; and in many caſes directly confuted by oppoſite facts and teſtimonies. For example; among the miraculous gifts, which are expreſly clamed by the Fathers, we find theſe three; *the gift of raiſing the dead*; *of ſpeaking with tongues*; *of underſtanding the holy Scriptures.* Now, with regard to the two firſt, the moſt ſignal and important of all gifts, after weighing all the circumſtances relating to them, and all that antiquity has delivered concerning them, I find the ſtrongeſt reaſon to be convinced, that there never was a genuin inſtance of either of them, in any age, after the days of the Apoſtles: which I collect, not onely from the improbability of the things themſelves, as they are affirmed by the Fathers, but from facts alſo, which evince the contrary. And as to the third gift; it is allowed and frankly confeſſed by all, as well friends as enemies; that inſtead of a divine and infallible interpretation of the Scriptures, a moſt abſurd and ridiculous method of interpreting them, was the very characteriſtic even of the earlieſt ages.

If any one therefore ſhould be diſpoſed to anſwer or confute, what I have affirmed in this book, he muſt take a different method, from what my Antagoniſts have hitherto purſued; muſt not expect, to bear down facts with ſyſtems; and from the ſuppoſed integrity and piety of the Fathers, to infer the certainty of what they atteſt: but muſt refer us to inſtances, which tally with their teſtimonies, and experimentally prove the truth of them. When any of the Fathers tell us then, *that many were raiſed from the dead in their days, in every place where there was a Chriſtian Church, and lived afterwards ſeveral years among them; and that others were heard to ſpeak in all kinds of languages:* theſe Anſwerers muſt ſhew, how thoſe teſtimonies were verified by facts; and what particular perſons were ſo raiſed, and indued with languages; or muſt alledge at leaſt ſome ſpecial effects of thoſe miracles, credibly reported by the ancient writers, either Heathens or Chriſtians. Again, when any of them declare, *that they were inlightened by the grace of God, with the gift of underſtanding the Scriptures:* it muſt be ſhewn, that thoſe ſpecimens, which they have given, as the fruit and proof of that gift will juſtify ſuch a pretenſion, and may reaſonably paſs for divinely inſpired. This, I ſay, is the onely way of anſwering, which can ſatisfy men of ſenſe; and what alone can in any manner affect or invalidate the force of my argument.

THE Introductory Diſcourſe.

IT is an opinion commonly received among Chriſtians, and above all, among thoſe of the *Romiſh* communion, that after the days of the Apoſtles, there reſided ſtill in the Primitive Church, through ſeveral ſucceſſive ages, a divine and extraordinary power of working miracles, which was frequently and openly exerted, in confirmation of the truth of the Goſpel, and for the conviction of unbelievers. This is generally alledged by the Divines of all Churches, in their diſputes with the Sceptics, as a ſubſidiary proof of the Divinity of the Chriſtian Doctrine; and as it is managed by the Church of *Rome*, is rendered more perſuaſive and affecting to the multitude, than what the Goſpel itſelf affords, by deducing the ſucceſſion of thoſe apoſtolical gifts down to our own times, and offering the teſtimony of the ſame miracles to the ſenſes even of the preſent Age.

Church of Rome

This then being univerſally adopted by the Papiſts, as an indiſputable fact, or an article rather of the Chriſtian Faith; and eſpouſed likewiſe in part by the Proteſtants, as ſubſervient in ſome degree to the Chriſtian cauſe, I thought it my duty to inquire into the grounds of it. For as it is the part of every Chriſtian, to inform himſelf, as far as he is able, of every thing, which his religion requires him, either to believe or to practiſe, ſo it is more eſpecially of thoſe, whom Providence has bleſſed with a capacity, and leiſure, and the opportunities of inquiring; nor yet merely for their own information, but for the inſtruction likewiſe of others, who want the ſame advantages.

It was this, which gave riſe to the preſent inquiry, and what induced me alſo, to publiſh the reſult of it. I was not led to the one, by an idle curioſity; nor to the other, by the vanity of combating eſtabliſhed opinions, but the duty of declaring my own: which, by the moſt impartial judgement, that I am able to form, I take not onely to be true, but uſeful alſo, and even neceſſary to the defence of Chriſtianity, as it is generally received, and ought always to be defended, in Proteſtant Churches.

But if the facts and teſtimonies, which obliged me to embrace it, ſhould not have the ſame force, nor ſuggeſt the ſame reflections to others, I ſhall neither be ſurprized, nor concerned at it: for it is every man's right to judge for himſelf; and a difference of opinion is as natural to us, as a difference of taſt: and when the ſenſual faculties are perpetually paſſing different judgements on the ſame objects in different men, it cannot be thought ſtrange, that the intellectual, in which nature ſeems to have formed a greater diſparity, ſhould act with the ſame variety. But if to the principles implanted in our nature, we add that peculiar biaſs, which every individual receives from education, example, or habit; and conſider what ſtrong prejudices, a zeal for opinions once imbibed, or an intereſt eſpecially accruing from them, is apt to inſtill even into the better ſort, we ſhould have cauſe rather to wonder, that any number of men ſhould ever be of one mind, in any quæſtion of difficulty or importance. Hence contrary doctrines in religion are frequently deduced from the ſame texts, and contrary ſyſtems of politics, from the ſame monuments.

Whatever judgement therefore any other man may form, or whatever he may write, on the ſubject of this performance, I ſhall not eaſily be drawn into any controverſy with him about it: but contenting myſelf with the diſcharge of my own conſcience, by this free declaration of my real ſentiments, and indulging the ſame liberty to every body elſe, ſhall leave the reſt to the judgement of the public. I do not mean however, by this profeſſion, to preclude myſelf ſo intirely from all farther concern with the preſent argument, as not to be ready on all occaſions, to acknowledge any miſtake, of which I may be convinced, in the repreſentation of any fact, or teſtimony, or character, which I have applied to the ſupport of it, and to retract it, in the ſame public manner, in which I committed it.

But beſides that general obligation, which is common to me with all other Chriſtians, of ſearching into the origin and evidences of our religion, I found myſelf particularly excited to this taſk, by what I had occaſionally obſerved and heard, of the late growth of Popery in this Kingdom, and the great number of Popiſh books, which have been printed and diſperſed amongſt us, within theſe few years: in which their writers make much uſe of that prejudice, in favor *of primitive antiquity*, which prevails even in this Proteſtant Country, towards drawing weak people into their cauſe, and ſhewing their worſhip to be the beſt, becauſe it is the moſt conformable to that ancient pattern. But the moſt powerful of all their arguments, and what gains them the moſt proſelytes, is, their confident atteſtation of miracles, as ſubſiſting ſtill in their Church, and the clear ſucceſſion of them, which they deduce through all hiſtory, from the Apoſtolic times, down to our own. This their Apologiſts never fail to diſplay, with all the force of their rhetoric; and with good reaſon; ſince it is a proof, of all others, the moſt ſtriking to vulgar minds, and the moſt deciſive indeed to all minds, as far as it is believed to be true.

Thus one of their principal Champions, with whom I have been engaged, demonſtrates the orthodoxy of their faith, and their true deſcent from that Church, to which our Lord has promiſed his preſence to the end of the world. For ſpeaking of the miracles of the Pagans, which I had oppoſed to thoſe of the Papiſts, he ſays; "God has been pleaſed in every age, "to work far more evident miracles in his Church, by the "miniſtry of his Saints; in raiſing the dead to life; in curing "the blind and the lame; in caſting out Devils; in healing "in a moment inveterate diſeaſes, and the like ſtupendous "works of his power; atteſted by the moſt authentic mo"numents; and very frequently, as may be ſeen in the acts "of the canonization of Saints, by the depoſitions of innu"merable eye-witneſſes, examined upon oath; and by the "public notoriety of the facts: which kind of miracles, ſo "authentically atteſted, will be to all ages a ſtanding evi"dence, that the Church, in whoſe Communion they have "all been wrought, is not that idolatrous, pagan Church, "which the Doctor pretends, but the true ſpouſe of Chriſt." [a] And

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[a] See *Catholic Chriſtian*. Pref. xviii.

N. B. I have been well informed, that among the deſertors from the *Engliſh* army in *Flanders*, who were taken in the time of the late rebellion and ſhot to death in *London*, there was one, who profeſſed to die in the *Romiſh* Communion, and being aſked by the Clergyman, who aſſiſted him, what

And in a ſecond piece, which the ſame writer has ſince publiſhed, he promiſes to give us an *hiſtory of the Chriſtian miracles* in a particular treatiſe, deduced, I ſuppoſe, from the earlieſt ages, down to the preſent.

Pious Cheats.

Now *theſe pious cheats of the Romiſh Church*, as Mr. *Leſlie* ſays, *are the ſoreſt diſgraces of Chriſtianity, and bid the faireſt of any one contrivance to overturn the certainty of the miracles of Chriſt, and the whole truth of the Goſpel, by putting them all upon the ſame foot* [b]. This hiſtory therefore of miracles, which is promiſed by that writer, induced me, more particularly at this time, to inquire into the genuin ſtate and ſucceſſion of them, through all the ſeveral ages of the Chriſtian Church, from the times of the Apoſtles; in order to diſcover the preciſe period and duration of them; and to ſettle ſome rule of diſcerning the true from the falſe; ſo as to be able to give a proper reaſon, for admitting the miracles of one age, and rejecting thoſe of another.

Miracle asserted and believed in all ages and all christian Countries till the Reformation.

It muſt be confeſſed however, in the firſt place, that this claim of a miraculous power, which is now peculiar to the Church of *Rome*, was univerſally aſſerted and believed in all Chriſtian countries, and in all ages of the Church, till the time of the

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what were the motives, which induced him to forſake the religion, in which he was bred, made anſwer, " That a Prieſt of a " very grave and civil behaviour had aſſured him, that miracles had been " wrought in confirmation of the Popiſh " doctrine, and particularly, that a Proteſtant woman came one day to their " Sacrament, with intent to make ſport " with it, and inſtead of ſwallowing the " conſecrated bread, found means to convey it into her pocket; but when ſhe " was making merry afterwards in company, with what ſhe had done, and " was going to produce the piece of bread, " which ſhe had pocketed, ſhe found " it changed into real fleſh and blood." And he added, " that there was no reaſon " to imagine, that a perſon, of ſo reverend a character, could have any deſign " or intereſt, to deceive him in the atteſtation of ſuch a miracle.'

[b] See *Leſlie*'s Short method, Vol. I. p. 24.

Reformation. For Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory makes no difference between one age and another; but carries on the ſucceſſion of it's miracles, as of all other common events, through all of them indifferently, to that memorable period. But the light of the Reformation diſpelled the charm: and what *Cicero* ſays of the *Pythian Oracle*, may be as truly ſaid of the Popiſh miracles; *when men began to be leſs credulous, their power vaniſhed* [c]. For that ſpirit of inquiry, with which Chriſtendom was then animated, detected the cheat, and expoſed to public view, the hidden ſprings and machinery of thoſe lying wonders, by which the world had been ſeduced and enſlaved to the tyranny of *Rome* [d].

And as the miracles of that age could not ſtand the teſt of a ſcrutiny, but were found, upon trial, to be the forgeries of a corrupt Clergy, ſo it gave juſt cauſe to ſuſpect, that thoſe *golden legends* of them as they were called, which had been tranſmitted to them from their Anceſtors, were of no better ſtamp, and that the Church of Chriſt had long been governed by the ſame arts. This alſo was found to be true by thoſe, who made it their buſineſs, to ſearch into the records of paſt ages: where, though it was eaſy to trace the marks of the ſame fictions, exerted in the ſame manner, and for the ſame ends, even up to the early times of the primitive Church, yet it was difficult, to fix the origin of them, or to mark the preciſe æra, in which the cheat firſt began.

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[c] Quando autem iſta vis evanuit an poſtquam homines minus creduli eſſe cœperunt? Cic. De Divin. 2. 57.

[d] Some of their Images were brought to *London*, and publicly broken there at *St. Paul's Croſs*, in the ſight of the people; that they might be fully convinced of the juggling impoſtures of the Monks. And in particular, the *Crucifix of Boxeley in Kent*, commonly called *the Rood of Grace*; to which many pilgrimages had beed made; becauſe it was obſerved ſometimes to bow, and to lift itſelf up; to ſhake and ſtir it's head, hands and feet; to rowl it's eyes; move the lips; and bend it's brows: all which were looked upon by the abuſed multitude, as the effects of a divine power. Theſe were now publicly diſcovered to have been cheats. For the ſprings were ſhewed, by which all theſe motions were made, &c.

See *Burnet*'s Hiſtory of the Reformation, Vol. I. 242.

Many learned men among the Proteſtants have attempted indeed to ſettle this point; but with ſo little ſucceſs, as to leave it at laſt as uncertain, as they found it; none of them having been able to adjuſt the exact limits between true and falſe miracles, or to ſhew, by any ſolid reaſon, how long after the days of the Apoſtles, the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit continued in the Church, or in what age they were actually withdrawn.

The moſt prevailing opinion is, that they ſubſiſted through the three firſt Centuries, and then ceaſed in the beginning of the fourth; or as ſoon as Chriſtianity came to be eſtabliſhed by the civil power. This, I ſay, ſeems to be the moſt prevailing notion at this day, among the generality of the Proteſtants; who think it reaſonable to imagine, that miracles ſhould then ceaſe, when the end of them was obtained, and the Church no longer in want of them; being now delivered from all danger, and ſecure of ſucceſs, under the protection of the greateſt power on earth.

Agreeably to this notion, Archbiſhop *Tillotſon* ſays, " that " on the firſt planting of the Chriſtian religion in the world, " God was pleaſed to accompany it with a miraculous power; " but after it was planted, that power ceaſed, and God left it " to be maintained by ordinary ways." And in another place, ſpeaking of the particular gift, *of caſting out Devils*, he obſerves,

" that it continued the longeſt of any, and there was reaſon, " that it ſhould continue, as long as the Devil reigned, and " Pagan Idolatry was kept up.——But when the powers of " the world became Chriſtian, and Satan's kingdom was every " where deſtroyed, then this miraculous gift alſo ceaſed, there " being no farther occaſion for it [e]." The late Dr. *Marſhall* alſo, who tranſlated the works of St. *Cyprian* into engliſh, taking notice of the continuance of miracles and ſupernatural gifts, and eſpecially of *prophecies and viſions*, in that *Cyprianic* age, declares, " that there are ſucceſſive evidences of them, which " ſpeak full and home to this point, from the beginning of " Chriſtianity, down to the age of *Conſtantine*, in whoſe times, " when Chriſtianity had acquired the ſupport of human powers, " thoſe extraordinary aſſiſtances were diſcontinued [f]." Yet this opinion, though generally received by the Proteſtants, is found liable ſtill to ſuch objections, and perplexed with ſuch difficulties, that even thoſe, who principally eſpouſe it, cannot wholly acquieſce in it, but are forced to propoſe it with ſome reſerve and exception.

Mr. *Dodwell*, one of the moſt zealous admirers of primitive Antiquity, and who has deduced the hiſtory of it's miracles with the greateſt accuracy, through the three firſt Centuries, cloſes his account of them, with the converſion of the Roman Empire to Chriſtianity; not daring, as he frequently declares, to venture any farther, on account of *the fabulous genius and manifeſt impoſtures of the fourth Century* [g]. But though he ſuppoſes the true miracles to have generally ceaſed from that time, yet he finds ſome particular inſtances of them, ſo ſtrongly atteſted by the Fathers of the beſt credit, through the reſt of the ſame century, that he cannot but admit them, as exceptions to his general rule [*h*].

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[e] Serm. Fol. 3. it. Vol. 3: p. 488. Edit. 1735.

[f] Epiſtles of *Cypr.* VII. not. b.

[g] Fateor ibi multa legi, quarti ſeculi impoſtorumque genium referentia, ut nolim ea certioribus immiſcere—Quam fuerint quarti ſeculi Scriptores fabulis dediti, *è vita Pauli Hieronymiana*; & *Athanaſiana Antonij*,

Mr. *Whiſton* contends, “ that theſe miraculous powers were “ totally withdrawn at the very time when the *Athanaſian* “ *Heresy*, as he calls it, was eſtabliſhed by the ſecond Council of “ *Conſtantinople*, about *A. D.* 381: and that as ſoon as the “ Church became *Athanaſian*, *Antichriſtian*, and *Popiſh*, they “ ceaſed immediately, and the Devil lent it his own cheating “ and fatal powers in their ſtead [*i*].”

Dr. *Waterland* on the other hand, the perpetual defender of *Athanaſius*, in his treatiſe on *the importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity*, often affirms, “ that the miraculous powers of the “ Church continued through the three firſt centuries at leaſt, “ as a manifeſt proof, that the true faith was there preſerved, “ where the ſpirit of truth ſo viſibly reſided [*k*]:” and in the addenda to the ſame work, he corrects himſelf, as it were, for a miſtake, in confining them to ſuch narrow limits, which, on the authority of *Paulinus*, he endeavours to extend, *to the latter end of the fourth century* [*l*].

Antonij, &c. intelligimus. Diſſert. in Iren. 2. §. LV.

Ex ipſa miraculorum hiſtoria ſatis conſtat, a quarto tandem ſeculo & temporibus *Euſebij*, ſenſim decreviſſe vera, & in deſuetudinem abiiſſe miracula. ib. LIX.

Ego me infra prima ſecula contineo, ante receptam in Imperio Chriſtianitatem, &c. ib. LXII.

[*h*] *Chryſoſtomus*—fatetur ſuo etiamnum tempore nonnulla fuiſſe ſigna, ſed & numero pauca, & locis variis hinc inde diſperſa.—Qui hæc itaque agnovit negatis tamen aliis, erat proculdubio & illa agniturus, ſi pari omnia evidentia conſtitiſſent. ib. LIX.

[*i*] See his Account of *the Dæmoniacs*, p. 65.

[*k*] See p. 299, 382, 383, 425.

[*l*] Ibid. p. 497.

Dr. *Chapman* declares, " that tho' the eſtabliſhment of Chri-
" ſtianity by the civil power, abated the neceſſity of miracles,
" and occaſioned a viſible decreaſe of them, yet after that revo-
" lution, there were inſtances of them ſtill, as public, as clear,
" as well atteſted, as any in the earlier ages [*m*]."

And not content, like Dr. *Waterland*, with carrying the ſucceſſion of them, to the end of the fourth century, he goes on to aſſure us, *that the fifth alſo had its portion, tho' ſmaller than the fourth* [*n*]*:* which he confirms by ſeveral inſtances, drawn from the middle of that fifth century, and then refers us to Dr. *Berriman*, for the accurate defence of another miracle, wrought in confutation of the *Arian Hereſy*, which brings us to the end of it [*o*].

Thus theſe eminent Divines, purſuing their ſeveral ſyſtems, and ambitious of improving ſtill upon each other's diſcoveries, ſeem unwarily to have betrayed the Proteſtant cauſe, by transferring the miraculous powers of the Church, the pretended inſigns of truth and orthodoxy, into the hands of it's enemies; and yielding up this ſacred depoſitum, like the old *Ancilia of Pagan* Rome, to the defence and ſupport of *Popiſh Rome*. For it was in theſe very primitive ages, and eſpecially in the *third, fourth and fifth centuries, thoſe floriſhing times of miraculous powers*, as Dr. *Chapman* calls them, in which the chief corruptions of Popery were either actually introduced, or the ſeeds of them ſo effectually ſown, that they could not fail of producing the fruits, which we now ſee. By theſe corruptions I mean, *the inſtitution of Monkery*; *the worſhip of reliques*; *invocation of Saints*;

[*m*] See *Miſcell. Tracts*, p. 170.

[*n*] Ibid. p. 173.

[*o*] Ibid. p. 175.

prayers for the Dead; *the ſuperſtitious uſe of Images*; *of the Sacraments*; *of the Sign of the Croſs*; *and of conſecrated oil*; by the efficacy of all which rites, and as a proof of their divine origin, perpetual miracles are affirmed to have been wrought in theſe very centuries.

For example; Monkery had it's beginning in the third, and a full eſtabliſhment in the fourth century: in which all the principal Fathers of the Church, both *Greek* and *Latin*, employed their authority and eloquence, to extol the perfection and recommend the practice of it; by writing the lives of particular Monks; celebrating their wonderful ſanctity and miraculous gifts; and founding monaſteries alſo, where-ever they travelled. St. *Athanaſius* was one of the firſt, who, from the pattern of the *Ægyptian* Monaſteries introduced them into *Italy and Rome, where they had been held before in utter contempt* [p]. St. *Baſil* calls it *an Angelical inſtitution: a bleſſed and Evangelic life, leading to the manſions of the Lord* [q]. St. *Jerom* declares, *the Societies of Monks and Nuns, to be the very flower and moſt precious ſtone among all the ornaments of the Church* [r]. St. *Chryſoſtom* calls it, *a way of life worthy of heaven, nor at all inferior to that of Angels* [s]. And St. *Auſtin* ſtiles them always, in a peculiar manner, *the Servants* of

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[p] Ignominioſum, ut tunc putabatur, & vile in populis nomen—Hieron. Oper. Tom. 4. par. 2. p. 780. Edit. Benedict.

[q] Baſil. Oper. Tom. 3. p. 101, 261, 310, 473.

[r] Certe flos quidam & pretioſiſſimus lapis inter Eccleſiaſtica ornamenta, Monachorum & Virginum chorus eſt. Hieron. ib. p. 551.

[s] Καὶ γὰρ ϖολιτείαν οὐρανῷ ϖρέπουσαν εἵλαντο, καὶ ἀγγέλων οὐδὲν χεῖρον διάκεινται. Chryſ. Oper. Tom. 1. p. 94. A. Edit. Benedict.

N. B. This ſame Father wrote three books againſt *the Oppugners of the Monaſtic life*; [Oper. T. 1. p. 44.] and a ſeparate one beſides, to prove it to be preferable even to that of a King. [ib. p. 116.] Among many other inſtances of this preference, he obſerves that a King, when depoſed and fallen from his throne, cannot recover it without the utmoſt difficulty; whereas a Monk, *of God* [*t*]. By the influence therefore of theſe Fathers, and the many lies and forged miracles, which they diligently propagated in honor of the Monks, innumerable Monaſteries, as they themſelves tell us, were over the *eaſtern World*; but eſpecially in *Syria*, *Palæſtine and Egypt*; whoſe deſerts were covered with them; and where, in the next age, there were ſome, which are ſaid to have had *five thouſand Monks* in them [*u*].

As to *the reliques of the Martyrs*, we find St. *Chryſoſtom* frequently haranguing on the great bleſſings, which the Church reaped from them, *and the daily miracles which were wrought by them* [*x*]*:* and he concludes one of his Homilies, on Two female Martyrs, *Bernice and Proſdoce*, in the following manner; "with this ardor therefore, let us fall down before their reliques: "let us embrace their coffins; for theſe may have ſome power, "ſince their bones have ſo great an one: and not onely on the

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Monk, who falls from his virtue, quickly recovers it by his penitence: of which he gives a curious example, in a ſtory, which he relates in another place, of an old Monk, who after he had nobly ſuſtained all the difficulties and fatigues of that diſcipline, was caught at laſt by the wiles of Satan, and fired with ſo violent a concupiſcence for women, that he ran away from his Cell, to a baudy-houſe in the neighbouring City, in order to quench his flame: where he had no ſooner ſatiated his luſt. than returning preſently to his duty, he became ſo ſtrict a penitent, that within a ſhort time after, when the country was afflicted with a famine, the people were directed by an expreſs revelation from heaven, to apply to him, as the onely perſon, who could relieve them from it by his prayers; by the force of which, the famine was accordingly averted. Ibid. 29, 30.

[*t*] *De Servis Dei* ſæpiſſime dicitur, tot annos ille in hoc vel in illo Monaſterio ſedit. Auguſt. Serm. 215. Op. T. 5. p. 947. D. Edit. Bened.

Cupiebas in ea vita vivere, in qua *Servi Dei*, Monachi vivunt. Epiſt. ad Bonifac. 220. T. 2. p. 812.

[*u*] Exemplo itaque ejus, per totam Palæſtinam innumerabilia Monaſteria eſſe cœperunt. [Hieron. Op. T. 4. par. 2. p. 82.] Quid referamus Armenios, quid Perſas, quid Indiæ & Æthiopiæ populos, ipſamque juxta Ægyptum, fertilem Monachorum—cunctaque Orientis examina—ibid. p. 551.

[*x*] Ἱκανα μὲν τὸν λόγον πιςώσαθαι, ϗ τὰ καθ' ἑκάςην ἡμέραν ὑπὸ τῶν μαρτύρων γινόμενα θαύματα. Chryſoſt. Op. T. 2 p. 555. Ed. Bened.

" day of their Feſtival, but on other days likewiſe, let us fix " ourſelves as it were to them, and entreat them to be our " patrons [y]:" and in his other Homilies, he often uſes the ſame peroration " to dwell in their Sepulchres, to fix them- " ſelves to their coffins; that not onely their bones, but their " tombs, and their urns alſo overflowed with benedictions [z]."

St. *Baſil* informs us, " that all, who were preſſed with any " difficulty or diſtreſs, uſed to fly for relief to the tombs of " the Martyrs; and whoſoever did but touch their reliques, acquired ſome ſhare of their ſanctity [a]." In the ſame age alſo, when *Vigilantius*, a learned and eminent Preſbyter of the Church wrote a book juſt as a Proteſtant would now write, *againſt the inſtitution of Monks*; *the celibacy of the Clergy*; *praying for the dead, and to the Martyrs*; *adoring their reliques*; *celebrating their Vigils*; *and lighting up candles to them after the manner of the Pagans*; St. *Jerom*, who anſwers him, defends all thoſe rites with a moſt outrageous zeal and acrimony of language, and treats *Vigilantius*, as a moſt profligate Heretic, uttering the blaſphemies, with which the Devil had inſpired him againſt the ſacred doctrines of the Church: " Anſwer me, ſays he, how it comes to paſs, " that in this vile duſt and aſhes of the Martyrs, there is ſo " great a manifeſtation of ſigns and wonders. I ſee, thou moſt " wretched of mortals, what thou art ſo grieved at, what ſo " afraid of; that unclean ſpirit, which compels thee to write " thus, has oft been tortured, and even now is tortured by this " vile duſt [b]." St. *Auſtin* alſo affirms, " that at *Milan*, while " he was there preſent, the reliques of the Martyrs, *Protaſius*

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[y] Ibid. p. 645. C.

[z] Ibid. p. 669. E.

[a] Baſil. Op. T. 2. p. 155. it. T. 3. 536.

[b] Hieron. Tom. 4. par. 2. p. 285, 286.

" and *Gervaſius*, which lay buried in a place unknown, were " reveled to St. *Ambroſe* in a dream; and that by the touch " onely of the ſame reliques, a blind man was reſtored to his " ſight; of which the whole people was witneſs, who flocked in crouds to the bodies of the ſaid Martyrs [c]."

In the ſacrament alſo of *the Euchariſt*, ſeveral ſtrange abuſes were introduced long before this fourth age. In *Juſtin Martyr*'s time, within fifty years after the days of the Apoſtles, *the cup was conſtantly mixed with water, and a portion of the conſecrated elements ſent alſo to the abſent* [d]: which ſoon became the ſource of much Superſtition. For that mixture, conſidered at firſt as prudential onely, and indifferent, is declared by *Irenæus*, *to have been taught and practiſed by our Saviour* [e]; and by St. *Cyprian*, to have been injoined to himſelf *by a divine revelation* [f]. The conſecrated bread alſo, which was ſent at firſt onely to the ſick, was in *Tertullian*'s and *Cyprian*'s days, carried home by the communicants, and locked up in boxes as a divine treaſure for their private uſe [g]. From this time it began to work Miracles; and was applied to drive Devils out of haunted houſes [h]; and carried with them by people, in their journeys and voyages, as an amulet or charm, to ſecure them from all dangers both by ſea and land [*i*].

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[c] Immenſo populo teſte res geſta eſt. De Civ. Dei. lib. 22. c. 8. Vid. etiam Hieron. ibid. p. 552. Samariam pergere, & Johannis Baptiſtæ, & Eliſæi, & Abdiæ pariter *cineres adorare*.

[d] Juſt. Mart. Apol. 1. p. 96. Edit. Thirlb.

[e] Accipens panem, ſuum corpus eſſe confitebatur; & temperamentum calicis, ſuum ſanguinem confirmavit. Iren. l. 4. c. 57. it. l. 5. c. 2. & 36.

[f] Nec nos putes, noſtra & humana conſcribere, aut ultronea voluntate hoc nobis audacter aſſumere—admonitos autem nos ſcias, ut in calice offerendo Dominica traditio ſervetur—ut calix, qui in commemoratione ejus offertur, mixtus vino offeratur. Epiſt. ad Cæcil. 63. Edit. Rigalt.

[g] Cum quædam arcam ſuam, in qua Domini ſanctum fuit, manibus indignis tentaſſet aperire, igne inde ſurgente deterrita eſt. Cypr. de Lapſis. p. 176.

[h] Nam etiam nunc fiunt miracula, in ejus nomine, ſive per Sacramenta ejus, &c. *Vid. Auguſt. de Civ. D.* 22. 8. §. 1, 6.

This Sacrament was adminiſtred likewiſe, in all their public communions, to infants, even of the tendereſt age, before they were able to ſpeak [*k*]: and was conſtantly ſtiled, *the Sacrifice of the body of Chriſt*; *which was always offered up*, as *Cyprian* ſays, *for the Martyrs*, *in their annual Feſtivals:* as it was alſo, according to St. *Jerom*, *by the Biſhop of Rome*, *over the venerable bones of St. Peter and St. Paul* [*l*]. Hence flowed thoſe amazing titles, which were given to it in this fourth age; of *moſt tremendous myſtery*; *dreadful ſolemnity*; *terrible to Angels*; *Myſtic table* [*m*]; *whoſe very Utenſils* and *ſacred coverings*, as St. *Jerom* ſays, *were not to be conſidered*, *like things inanimate*, *and void of ſenſe*, *to have no ſanctity*, *but to be worſhipped with the ſame majeſty*, *as the body and*

[*i*] *St. Ambroſe* relates a remarkable inſtance of this, in the caſe of one of his intimate friends, called *Satyrus*; who was a pious and zealous Chriſtian, but had not yet received the Sacrament, or *been initiated*, as he calls it, *in the more perfect myſteries*. In this ſtate, he happened to ſuffer Shipwreck in his paſſage from Afric, and the Ship itſelf to be broken to Pieces, upon which, ſays *Ambroſe*, "*Satyrus* not being "afraid of death, but to die onely, be"fore he had partaken of thoſe myſteries, "begged of ſome of the company, who "had been initiated, that they would "lend him the divine Sacrament, (which "they carried about with them) not to "feed his curioſity, by peeping into the "inſide of the Box, but to obtain the be"nefit of his Faith, for he wrapped up "the Myſteries in his Handkerchief, and "then tying it about his neck, threw "himſelf into the Sea; never troubling "himſelf to look out for a plank, which "might help him to ſwim, ſince he want"ed nothing more, than the Arms of his "Faith: nor did his Hopes fail him, for "he was the firſt of the company, who "got ſafe to the Shore." De Exceſſu Satyri, l. i. §. 43, 44. p. 1125. Op. T. 2. Ed. Bened.

[*k*] Cypr. ibid. p. 175.

[*l*] Sacrificia pro eis ſemper, ut meminiſtis, offerimus, quoties Martyrum paſſiones & dies, anniverſaria commemoratione celebramus. Id. Epiſt. 34. p. 48. Vid. it. Hieron. T. 4. par. 2. p. 284.

[*m*] Επ᾽ αὐτῶν ϖάλιν φρικωδεστάτων μυστηρίων. [Chryſoſt. Oper. T. x. p. 568.] τραπέζης ϗ σφόδρα φρικωδεστάτης. [ib. p. 245. D.] ἣν ϗ Ἄγγελοι φρίττουσι. Id. T. xi. p. 22. C.

blood of our Lord [n]. And what is all this, but a deſcription of *that Sacrifice of the Maſs*, which the *Romaniſts* offer at this day, both *for the living and the dead*; and the ſame miraculous tales, which they ſtill relate, of their *tranſubſtantiated* bread?

The cuſtom of *praying for the dead*, had alſo a very early origin: for it was common, as we learn from *Tertullian*, even in the ſecond century [o]; and became the univerſal practice of the following ages: ſo that in the fourth, we find it reckoned as a ſort *of Hereſy*, to deny the efficacy of it [p]. The purpoſe of it was to procure relief and refreſhment to the departed ſouls, in ſome intermediate ſtate of expiatory pains, which, according to the opinion of thoſe times, all men were to ſuffer for their ſins, except the Martyrs, and Saints of the firſt claſs [q.] A doctrine and practice, which could not fail of giving birth to the Popiſh Purgatory.

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[n] Ut diſcant, qui ignorant,——qua debeant veneratione ſancta ſuſcipere, & altaris Chriſti miniſterio deſervire; ſacroſque calices, & ſancta velamina, & cetera, quæ ad cultum Dominicæ paſſionis pertinent, non quaſi inania & ſenſu carentia, ſanctimoniam non habere, ſed ex conſortio corporis & ſanguinis Domini, eadem qua corpus ejus & ſanguis majeſtate veneranda. Hieron. Ep. 88. ad Theophil. T. 4. par. 2. 728.

[o] Enimvero & pro anima ejus orat, & refrigerium interim adpoſtulat ei, & in prima reſurrectione conſortium, & offert annuis diebus dormitionis ejus. De Monogam. x. p. 682. A. Edit. Nic. Rigalt. N. B. This paſſage may want a little explication. *Tertullian*, in this treatiſe, is labouring to prove, that the ſecond marriages of Chriſtians are utterly unlawful, and forbidden to them by the Goſpel, and though the parties be ſeparated from each other by the death of either, that the matrimonial bond ſtill ſubſiſts, and obliges the Survivor: *For the widow*, ſays he, *prays for the Soul of her departed huſband; and begs refreſhment for him in his intermediate ſtate; and to be a partner with him in the firſt reſurrection; and makes an oblation for him every year, on the Day of his death.* By all which ſhe acknowledges and keeps up her conjugal union, and cannot therefore marry any other man; becauſe, to have one huſband in the Spirit and another in the Fleſh, is adultery, *&c.*

[p] Vid. Epiphan. Hæreſ. lxxv. § 3 and 7.

[q] Vid. Orig. con. Celſum. l. 6. p. 292. Tertull. De. Anim. c. 55, 58.

The *Sign of the Croſs* likewiſe, was the ſubject of much ſuperſtition in thoſe ages. " *Every ſtep that we take*, ſays *Tertullian*; " *when we come in or go out*; *put on our cloaths*, *or our ſhoes*; *when* " *we bath*, *eat*, *light up candles*, *go to bed*, *or ſit down*; *we mark* " *our foreheads with the ſign of the Croſs.* " If for theſe, and other " acts of diſcipline of the ſame kind, you demand a text of " Scripture, you will find none; but tradition will be alledged " to you, as the preſcriber of them [r]." It was thought a ſure preſervative againſt all ſorts of malignity, poiſons, or faſcination; and effectual to drive away evil ſpirits; and is affirmed by the principal Fathers of the fourth century, to have wrought many illuſtrious miracles. " This ſign, ſays St. " *Chryſoſtom*, both in the days of our Forefathers, and in our " own, has thrown open gates, that were ſhut; deſtroyed " the effects of poiſonous drugs; diſſolved the force of hemlock; " and cured the bites of venomous beaſts [s]."

The *ſacred oil* alſo of the Church, was held in great veneration in theſe ſame days, as an univerſal remedy in all diſeaſes. For which purpoſe, it was either prepared and diſpenſed by Prieſts and holy Monks; or was taken from *the lamps* which were burning before the reliques of the Martyrs. St. *Jerom* mentions great numbers, who had been cured of *the bites of venomous animals*, *by touching their wounds with the firſt ſort* [t]: And

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[r] Ad omnem progreſſum atque promotum; ad omnem aditum atque exitum, ad veſtitum, ad calciatum, ad lavacra, ad menſas, ad lumina, ad cubilia, ad ſedilia, quæcunque nos converſatio exercet, frontem crucis ſignaculo terimus. Harum & aliarum ejuſmodi diſciplinarum ſi legem expoſtules Scripturarum, nullam invenies, traditio tibi prætendetur auctrix, &c. De Coron. 3.

[s] *Τοῦτο τὸ σημεῖον καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν προγόνων ἡμῶν, καὶ νῦν, θύρας ἀνέῳξε κεκλεισμένας*, &c. Tom. 7. p. 552. A.

[t] Benedicto itaque oleo univerſi agricolæ atque paſtores, tangentes vulnera, certam ſalutem reſumebant. Vit. S. Hilarion. Op. T. 4. par. 2. p. 86.

St. *Chryſoſtom* ſpeaks of many, who had been healed of their diſtempers, *by anointing themſelves with the ſecond* [u]. And St. *Auſtin* affirms, from his own knowledge, that a *young woman had been freed from a Devil*; and *a young man reſtored even from death to life, by the uſe of it* [x].

Laſtly, as to *Images and pictures*, it appears from St. *Chryſoſtom*, that great numbers of them were ſtanding in the principal Churches of that age [y]; and from the other writers of the ſame age; that the acts of the Saints and Martyrs began to be painted on the walls of thoſe particular Churches, which were dedicated to their names [z]: and it is natural to imagine, that they would not long be conſidered, as mere ornaments, or memorials, or books, as they were called, for the illiterate, but would gradually acquire a ſhare of that veneration, which the bones of thoſe, whom they repreſented, had already acquired in the ſame Churches: and we are told accordingly by St. *Auſtin*, that he knew many, *who were actually the adorers of them* [a].

Theſe were the principles and the practices of the fourth Century; as they are declared by the moſt eminent Fathers of that age: whence every one may ſee, what a reſemblance they bear to the preſent rites of the Popiſh Church. But ſome perhaps will be apt to ſuſpect, that I am really defending the corruptions of that Church, by aſſigning to them an origin ſo ancient and venerable: and the ſuſpicion indeed may ſeem plauſible, ſince I have been ſaying little elſe, but what the Papiſts themſelves would ſay on the ſame occaſion. Yet it is no more, than what fact and truth oblige me to ſay; and no controverſy, I hope, will ever heat me, or prejudice biaſs me ſo far, as to make me deny or diſſemble, what the conviction of my own mind requires me to confeſs. But whatever advantage the Romaniſts may hope to reap from this conceſſion, it really gives them none at all. Our diſpute with them is, not how ancient, but how true their doctrines and practices are: And if they are not derived from Chriſt or his Apoſtles, nor founded in the holy Scriptures, it is wholly indifferent to us Proteſtants, from what age they drew their birth; whether it was from the *four firſt*, or the *four laſt* centuries of the Church.

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[u] *Καὶ ἴσασιν ὅσοι μετὰ πίστεως καὶ εὐκαίρως ἐλαίῳ χρισάμενοι νοσήματα ἔλυσαν.* Chryſ. ib. p. 337. C.

[x] Hipponenſem quandam Virginem ſcio, cum ſe oleo perunxiſſet, cui pro illa orans Preſbyter inſtillaverat lacrymas ſuas, mox a Dæmonio fuiſſe ſanatam. [De Civ. D. l. 22. c. 8. §. 8.]

Rurſus apud nos, *Irenæi* cujuſdam filius ægritudine extinctus eſt. Cumque corpus jaceret exanimum, atque exequiæ pararentur, amicorum quidam ſuggeſſit, ut ejuſdem Martyris oleo, corpus perungeretur. Factum eſt, & revixit. ibid. §. 18.

[y] Oper. Tom. xi. p. 78.

[z] Forte requiratur quanam ratione gerendi
Sederit hæc nobis ſententia, *pingere Sanctas*
Raro more damos, &c. Vid. Paulini Oper. Natal. ix.

[a] Novi multos eſſe Sepulchrorum & picturarum adoratores. De Morib. Eccleſ. Cathol. Op. T. i. p. 34.

But this ſhort ſketch, which I have been giving of thoſe primitive times, was not deſigned ſo much to illuſtrate the origin of their rites, as to lay open the grounds of their miracles; and to ſhew what reaſons the Romiſh Church hath to eſpouſe, and what the Proteſtant Churches, if they are conſiſtent with themſelves, to ſuſpect and diſclame them. For example, after the converſion of the *Roman* Empire to Chriſtianity, we ſhall find the greateſt part of their boaſted miracles to have been wrought either by *Monks*, or *Reliques*, or *the Sign of the Croſs*, or *conſecrated Oil:* wherefore if we admit the Miracles, we muſt neceſſarily admit the rites, for the ſake of which they were wrought: they both reſt on the ſame bottom, and mutually eſtabliſh each

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other. For it is a maxim, which muſt be allowed by all Chriſtians, that whenever any ſacred rite or religious inſtitution becomes the inſtrument of miracles, we ought to conſider that rite, as confirmed by divine approbation. " I know, ſays one " of the ableſt writers of the *Romiſh* Church, by the evidence " of manifeſt and incorrupt tradition, that there hath always " been a never-interrupted ſucceſſion of men from the Apoſtles " time, believing, profeſſing, and practiſing ſuch and ſuch " doctrines, by evident argument of credibility, as miracles, " ſanctity, unity, *&c.* and by all thoſe ways, whereby the " Apoſtles and our bleſſed Saviour himſelf confirmed their doc" trines: And we are aſſured, that what the ſaid never-inter" rupted Church propoſeth, doth deſerve to be accepted and " acknowledged as a divine truth [*b*]." And thus far we muſt own, the Jeſuit argues rightly; that if we receive thoſe *arguments of credibility*, as he calls them, we muſt receive the doctrines which accompany them, as ſo many *divine verities, reveled and atteſted by Almighty God.* So that if the authority of a *Chryſoſtom*, or a *Jerom*, or an *Auſtin* can oblige us to believe the miracles of the fourth century, they muſt oblige us alſo, to eſpouſe the rites, which thoſe miracles confirmed, and thoſe Fathers practiſed.

Dr. *Chapman* however, not aware perhaps of this conſequence, or not allowing it to have any force, is not ſatisfied with aſſerting the miracles of the fourth century, but, as if more were ſtill wanted to the ſupport of the Chriſtian cauſe, frankly undertakes the defence alſo of the fifth; in which all thoſe ſuperſtitious practices, above mentioned, had gained a greater root, and more general eſtabliſhment: And while the warmeſt admirers of the primitive times, can hardly digeſt the wonderful tales of the fourth age, on the united teſtimony of all its renowned Fathers, he thinks himſelf obliged, to eſpouſe thoſe of the more corrupt age, which follows, upon the ſingle authority of *Theodoret*.

[*b*] See Mr. *Knot*, on Charity maintained, &c. in the Works of *Chillingworth*, 7th Edit. c. vi. p. 228. §. 6.

But to this, I ſhall ſpeak more fully hereafter, in the following work; where I ſhall conſider thoſe particular miracles, which Dr. *Chapman* has ſelected, as the proper objects of our belief, and defended as ſuch, againſt the enemies of the Chriſtian faith. In the mean while, I ſhall offer onely a ſingle paſſage from the ſame *Theodoret*, on whoſe teſtimony he lays ſo great a ſtreſs, which will help, not onely to confirm what I have already been advancing, but give us a ſpecimen alſo, of the character of this Father, as well as of the ſtate of Chriſtianity in this fifth age.

" The Temples of our Martyrs, ſays he, are ſhining and
" conſpicuous: eminent for their grandor, and the variety
" of their ornaments; and diſplaying far and wide the ſplen-
" dor of their beauty. Theſe we viſit, not once or twice, or
" five times in the year, but frequently offer up hymns each day
" to the Lord of them; in health we beg the continuance of
" it; in ſickneſs, the removal of it; the childleſs beg children,
" and the barren to become mothers; and when theſe bleſſings
" are obtained, we beg the ſecure enjoyment of them. When
" we undertake any journey, we beg them to be our compa-
" nions and guides in it: and when we return ſafe, we pay
" them our thanks: and that thoſe, who pray with faith and
" ſincerity, obtain what they aſk, is manifeſtly teſtified by the

" number of offerings, which are made to them, in conſequence " of the benefits received. For ſome offer the figures of eyes; " ſome of feet; ſome of hands, made either of gold or of ſilver; " which the Lord accepts, tho' but of little value; meaſuring " the gift, by the faculties of the giver. But all theſe are the " evident proofs of the cures of as many diſtempers; being pla- " ced there, as monuments of the fact, by thoſe, who have " been made whole. The ſame monuments likewiſe proclame " the power of the dead. Whoſe power alſo demonſtrates " their God, to be the true God [c]."

Now this is nothing elſe, but the very picture of that ſame ſuperſtition, which is practiſed at this day by the Papiſts, and was borrowed of old from the Pagans [d]. *Livy* tells the ſame thing of the Temples of the Heathen Gods which *Theodoret* does here of the Temples of their Saints; that *they were rich in the number of offerings*, which the people uſed to make *in return for the cures*, and benefits which they had received from them [e]. In both caſes, we allow the offerings to be real, but take the cures, or the miraculous part of them at leaſt, to be imaginary: and as we reject *Livy*'s miracles without ſcruple, or any hurt to the faith of hiſtory, ſo we may reject *Theodoret*'s too, without ſhaking the evidence of any thing elſe, that is credible.

Thus we ſee, to what a ſtate of things, the miracles of the fourth and fifth centuries would reduce us: they would call us back again to the old ſuperſtition of our anceſtors; would fill us with *Monks and reliques, and Maſſes*, and all the other trinkets, which the treaſury of *Rome* can ſupply: for this is the neceſſary effect of that zeal, which would engage us in the defence of them. But if the miracles of theſe later ages muſt needs be rejected; and if, as I have ſaid above, Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory makes no difference between them, and thoſe of the earlier ages, it may reaſonably be aſked, where then are we to ſtop? and to what period muſt we confine ourſelves? And this indeed is the grand difficulty, which was the chief object of my attention, through this whole inquiry; and what has puzzled all the other Doctors, who have been conſidering the ſame quæſtion before me. But before I give any anſwer to it, or declare my own opinion, it may be proper, to premiſe a remark or two, on the inſufficiency of the ſeveral ſyſtems already advanced; and to lay down ſome general principles, which may lead us to a more rational ſolution of the matter, than what has hitherto been offered.

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[c] Serm. 8. de Martyrib.

[d] See my Letter from *Rome* on this ſubject.

[e] Epidaurus, inclita Æſculapij nobili templo,—tum donis dives erat, quæ remediorum ſalutarium ægri mercedem ſacraverant Deo. lib. 45. 28.

Mr. *Dodwell*, as we have ſeen above, chuſes to ſhut up the hiſtory of true miracles with the *three firſt centuries*; condemning thoſe of the fourth, as generally forged and fabulous: for the proof of which, he appeals to the monſtrous fictions, which St. *Athanaſius*, St. *Jerom*, and St. *Gregory* of *Nyſſa*, have related. And thus far, I intirely agree with him; that the pretended miracles of this age are utterly incredible; and particularly thoſe, to which he refers us, and to which we might add many more, affirmed alſo from their own knowledge, by St. *Auſtin*, St. *Epiphanius*, and all the other Saints of the ſame times. Yet after ſo free a cenſure on the miracles of the fourth age, the ſame learned writer thinks it neceſſary ſtill, to make ſome exceptions, for a few of them, which St *Chryſoſtom* has atteſted. But ſuch a diſtinction appears to be wholly groundleſs:

or if there be any difference between this particular Father and the reſt of them, it is clearly to the diſadvantage of *Chryſoſtom*, when conſidered in the character of a witneſs. For his peculiar talents were thoſe of a declamatory Preacher, whoſe art lay, in warming the paſſions, not in convincing the reaſon; and whoſe pompous ſtile and rhetorical floriſhes, inſtead of being adapted to a ſimple narrative of plain facts, was apt rather to exaggerate plain facts into miracles [*f*]. And as there is no ground for any preference, in his perſonal character, ſo there is none likewiſe in the particular miracles, which he atteſts; which are all ſaid to be wrought, not by the miniſtry of any living and holy men, but by the *reliques of the dead*; or *the oil of their lamps*; or *the ſign of the Croſs.*

Dr. *Waterland* ſeems to have been of the ſame mind in general with Mr. *Dodwell*, concerning the miracles of the fourth century; yet being loth to part with them, and much more, to fix any ſlur on the credit of it's principal Fathers, has uſed a little artifice in the manner of declaring it. For after he has often affirmed, *that the miraculous powers of the Church ſubſiſted through the three firſt centuries* at leaſt, he adds the following amendment to it, *Nay, and if* ° *we may believe* Paulinus, *who reports it as an eye-witneſs, they continued down to the latter end of the fourth* [*g*]. But why muſt we be referred to *Paulinus* onely, in a quæſtion of ſuch importance? a name, unknown to the greateſt part of his readers; while the names of *Athanaſius, Baſil, Auſtin, Jerom, Chryſoſtom,* are in every body's mouth, and appealed to by himſelf on every other occaſion; and who have

Mid[illegible] makes
Paulinus, Athanaſius
Baſil, Austin, Jerom
Chrysostom all Liars

[*f*] Ac ne forſitan Rhetores vobis diſpliceant, quorum artis eſt veriſimilia magis, quam vera dicere——Hieron. Oper. T. 4. par. 2. p. 236.

[*g*] Import. of the Trin. p. 497.

written whole books, on the miracles of that very age, wrought by *Saints, and Monks, and Reliques*; many of which they have reported likewiſe, as eye-witneſſes, as well as *Paulinus*. The omiſſion therefore of theſe greater names, which could not poſſibly be accidental, is a clear, tho' tacit confeſſion that he knew them all to have forfeited their credit, in this particular cauſe: and that even his beloved *Athanaſius*, on whoſe faith he had pinned his own, and on the defence of whoſe orthodoxy, he had ſpent his whole life and ſtudies, was not to be truſted at laſt with the report of a miracle,

But what is it after all, that *Paulinus* could teach us, more credibly than any of the reſt? He was a noble convert from Paganiſm, and Biſhop of *Nola* in *Italy*: where he built a Church to St. *Felix* the Martyr, with whoſe acts he painted it, and with whoſe reliques he enriched it; and has celebrated, both in proſe and verſe, the miracles performed by thoſe reliques [*h*]. But the particular miracle, for which we are referred to him by the Doctor as an eye-witneſs, is this; that "when St. *Ambroſe*, upon the conviction of a certain of-
"fender, was pronouncing the ſentence of excommunication
"againſt him; in the very inſtant of delivering him over to
"Satan, and while the words were yet in his mouth, the Devil
"began to ſeize and tear him, as his own, to the great amaze-
"ment and wonder of *Paulinus*, and the reſt, who were pre-
"ſent [*i*]."

On the whole then; after the ſtricteſt attention to what both the antients and the moderns alſo have delivered on this ſubject,

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[*h*] Vid. Paulin. Peom. XVII. p. 77, 78. Oper. Edit. Par. 4to.

[*i*] See Dr. *Waterland*, ibid.

I find great reaſon to be convinced, that the pretended miracles of the fourth century, were not onely in general, and for the greateſt part, but intirely and univerſally, the effects of fraud and impoſture. Nor can I ſee the leaſt ground to admit any exception, either with Mr. *Dodwell*, for thoſe reported by St. *Chryſoſtom*; or with Dr. *Waterland*, for thoſe by *Paulinus*: For I take it to be a maxim, on which we may ſafely depend, that wherever the Biſhops, the Clergy, and the principal Champions of the Chriſtian cauſe, are found to be tampering with falſe miracles, and eſtabliſhing new rites and doctrines by lies and forgeries, it would be vain for us, to look for any true miracles in that age, and that Church. And this was actually the caſe of the fourth century: in which all it's moſt illuſtrious Fathers, now Saints of the Catholic Church; St. *Athanaſius*, St. *Epiphanius*, St. *Baſil*, St. *Gregory* of *Nyſſa*, St. *Ambroſe*, St. *Jerom*, St. *Auſtin*, and St. *Chryſoſtom* have all ſeverally recorded and ſolemnly atteſted a number of miracles, ſaid to be wrought in confirmation of ſome favorite inſtitutions of thoſe days, which, in the judgment of all the learned and candid Proteſtants, are manifeſtly fictitious, and utterly incredible.

We have now therefore gained ſome footing and ground as it were to ſtand upon. For this diſcovery of the ſtate of the fourth century, will reflect freſh light on our ſearches, both backwards and forwards; and from it's middle ſituation, give us a clearer view, as well into the earlier, as the later ages. For example; if we ſuppoſe the miraculous powers of the Church to have been withdrawn, in the beginning of this century, the firſt inference, which it ſuggeſts, is, that they were withdrawn likewiſe through all the ſucceding centuries. Becauſe the reaſons, for which they are imagined to have ceaſed at this particular period, grow ſtronger ſtill in every later age, as the Church was every day gaining ſtrength and a firmer eſtabliſhment, not onely from the protection of the Magiſtrate, but from an authority and power of it's own, independent on the civil Government.

But above all, when, in all theſe later ages, inſtead of meeting with genuin miracles, we find fables and fictions, aſſuming that ſacred character, and abounding ſtill more and more, and, by the pretence of a divine authority, giving a ſanction to *Heatheniſh Rites and ſuperſtitious Doctrines*, it would be childiſh, to expect the revival of real miracles, unleſs it were to detect and deſtroy the effects of thoſe falſe ones, which were ſo evidently corrupting the faith and worſhip of the Chriſtian Church. Since the miracles then of the fifth century, which our Doctors ſo ſtrenuouſly defend, inſtead of defeating the frauds of the fourth, tend ſtill to confirm them; being performed chiefly by the ſame inſtruments, and for the ſame ends; we muſt neceſſarily rank them all under the ſame claſs of mere forgeries. But theſe advocates of the primitive miracles have not yet given us the leaſt hint, or reaſon to imagine, that they intend to ſtop here, or to confine themſelves even to the fifth century: ſince the ſame principles which carried them ſo far, would carry them ſtill farther, if the credit of Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, or it's miracles ſhould happen to be attacked by an Infidel or Heretic.

For example; *Pope Gregory* the firſt, commonly called *the Great*, wrote *four books of Dialogues*, in which he deſcribes *the lives and miracles of the Italian Monks*; many of them from his own knowledge, and the reſt, as he declares, from the teſtimony of grave and venerable perſons, on whoſe fidelity he could depend. Theſe books were written in the end of the ſixth century, and are filled with a number of ſtories, ſo groſſly abſurd, and fabulous, that it would be difficult, one would think, to find any old woman in theſe days, ſo weakly credulous, as to believe them. They inform us of many perſons “ actually “ raiſed from the dead; many blind reſtored to ſight; and, all “ ſorts of diſeaſes cured, by the prayers or touch of thoſe “ Monks [*k*]: Of their walking upon water, as freely as upon “ dry land; of rivers drawn by them from their natural courſe, “ and following them into a new channel, which they traced “ out to them. Of inundations of water riſing up almoſt to “ the roofs of Churches, without entering the doors of them, “ which ſtood open: Of the arm of an Executioner, fixed upright in the air, as it was lifted up, to ſtrike off the head of “ one of thoſe holy men, and reſtored by him on condition, “ that it ſhould never again behead any Chriſtian: Of veſſels “ of oil and wine miraculouſly repleniſhed; and of pieces of “ gold, as freſh as from the mint, dropt from heaven into their “ laps:” with numberleſs other miracles, more trifling ſtill and deſpicable, contrived chiefly to advance *the honour of Monkery*; *the worſhip of Saints and of the bleſſed Virgin*; *the belief of a Purgatory*; *and the divine effects of Holy Water*, &c. [*l*].

The apparent forgery of theſe miracles, and the confident atteſtation of them by *Gregory*, has induced many Proteſtants, and even ſome Papiſts alſo, to call in quæſtion the genuineneſs of theſe books: but the learned *Cave*, after duly weighing all the arguments, on the one ſide and the other, takes them to have been really written by *Gregory the Great*; *who indulged his*

[*k*] Vid. Gregor. Magn. Dial. l. 1. c. 2. 10. 12: l. 2. 32: l. 2. 17, 33, &c.

[*l*] Ibid. l. 2. c. 7: l. 3. 9, 19, 37: l. 1. 5, 9, 10. l. 4. 15, 16, 39, 40.

credulity in them, he ſays, *and gave more attention to fables, than he ought to have done, as all, who judge equitably and without prejudice, will eaſily allow* [m]. But theſe Dialogues contain ſeveral miracles, ſaid to have been wrought in confutation of the *Arian Hereſy*; of which Dr. *Berriman* makes ſome uſe, in his elaborate defence of the *Athanaſian Doctrine*; where ſpeaking of the objections, which have been made againſt the authority of the Dialogues, he takes occaſion to obſerve; *that as far as thoſe objections ariſe from the miraculouſneſs of the things related, he ſees not, why we ſhould diſpute the facts, unleſs it could be proved, as it certainly cannot, that miracles were then ceaſed* [n].

Thus the miraculous powers of the Church are expreſsly avowed by him, to the end even of the ſixth century; in which Popery had gained a full eſtabliſhment: yet this Proteſtant Divine cannot conceive the leaſt reaſon to diſpute *the miraculouſneſs of thoſe facts* which eſtabliſhed it; nay, defies any man to prove, *that miracles were yet ceaſed in this* Popiſh age.

In his accurate defence of that miracle of the fifth century, referred to above, amongſt his other teſtimonies, he mentions the authority of this ſame *Gregory the Great*, and of his contemporary, *Iſidore* of *Sevil, who had too much learning and judgement,* he ſays, *to be deceived in ſo important a fact* [o]. And ſince he thinks them infallible, in reporting a fact, which happened, as he owns, near *an hundred years* before, he has much more reaſon, to think them ſo, in relating the facts of their own times: of which times however, Dr. *Cave* gives us the following character, under that of *Evagrius,* the principal Hiſtorian of them, of whom he ſays; "that he was agreeable "enough in his ſtile, and more accurate in the orthodoxy of "his doctrines, than the other Hiſtorians, but too credulous, "and much addicted to fables, as it is manifeſt to all, who "are not blinded by their prejudices, from the ſtories, which "he relates on every occaſion, concerning *the Croſs, and re-"liques, and forged miracles,* to be in high eſteem in thoſe "days [*p*]." Yet neither the fabulous genius of this age: nor the incredibility of the miracles, ſaid to have been wrought in it; nor the impertinence, the abſurdity, nor the impiety, I may ſay, of the ends, for which they were wrought, can ſhock the faith of Dr. *Berriman*; or raiſe any ſuſpicion of *the miraculouſneſs of facts,* affirmed by the *infallibility* of *Pope Gregory.*

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[m] Hiſt. Litter. V. I. p. 543. not. q.

[n] See Hiſtorical account of the Trinitarian Controverſy Serm. VII. p. 356.

[o] See Berrim. ibid. p. 330.

Since the zeal then of theſe Proteſtant Guides has now brought us within the very pale of the *Romiſh* Church, I ſee nothing, which can ſtop their progreſs, from the ſixth age, down to the preſent: from *Pope Gregory, the Great, to Pope Clement,* the twelfth; the laſt of whom I perſonally knew, and believe to have been as honeſt and religious a Pontif, as the firſt. For each ſucceding age will furniſh miracles, and witneſſes too, of as good credit as thoſe of the ſixth. The next ſupplies a *venerable Bede*; whoſe very name carries authority; and whoſe learning, zeal and purity of faith and manners, were celebrated through the Chriſtian world; yet whoſe works are filled with miracles, which no man of ſenſe can believe [*q*]. The eighth age yields a *Damaſcene: whoſe great knowledge and erudition in all the learned ſciences, no body,* ſays *Cave, in his ſenſes can*

[*p*] Hiſt. Litterar. Vol. I. p. 547.

[*q*] Vid. Bed. de Vita & miraculis Sancti Cuthbert. Op. Hiſtoric. Ed. Cantab. p. 229.

deny: yet he was monſtrouſly credulous, and, as the Popiſh writers themſelves allow, abounds with lies [r]. And thus we may procede, thro' every following age, to find men of the ſame character; eminent for their learning, zeal and piety; yet all of them ſtill carrying on the ſame frauds, down to *the Perrons, the Baronius's, the Bellarmines, and the Huetius's*, of theſe later times; whoſe names are full as venerable, and teſtimonies as credible, as any of the more ancient.

From theſe premiſes, it is evident, that the forged miracles of the fourth century, muſt neceſſarily taint the credit of all the later miracles, down even to the preſent age. For they depend as it were upon each other, as the parts of one uniform ſeries, or chain, ſo that where-ever we draw out a link, all the reſt which hang upon it, muſt of courſe fall to the ground. Let us conſider then in the next place, what light the ſame forgeries will afford us, in looking backward alſo into the earlier ages, up to the times of the Apoſtles.

And firſt, when we reflect on that ſurprizing confidence and ſecurity, with which the principal Fathers of this fourth age have affirmed as true, what they themſelves had either forged or what they knew at leaſt to be forged; it is natural to ſuſpect, that ſo bold a defiance of ſacred truth could not be acquired, or become general at once, but muſt have been carried gradually to that height, by cuſtom and the example of former times, and a long experience of what the credulity and ſuperſtition of the multitude would bear.

Secondly, this ſuſpicion will be ſtrengthened, by conſidering, that this age, in which Chriſtianity was eſtabliſhed by the civil power, had no real occaſion for any miracles. For which reaſon, the learned among the Proteſtants have generally ſuppoſed it, to have been the very æra of their ceſſation: and for the ſame reaſon, the Fathers alſo themſelves, when they were diſpoſed to ſpeak the truth, have not ſcrupled to confeſs, *that the miraculous gifts were then actually withdrawn, becauſe the Church ſtood no longer in need of them* [s]. So that it muſt have been a raſh, and dangerous experiment, to begin to forge miracles, at a time, when there was no particular temptation to it; if the uſe of ſuch fictions had not long been tried, and the benefit of them approved and recommended by their anceſtors: who wanted every help, towards ſupporting themſelves under the preſſures and perſecutions, with which the powers on earth were afflicting them.

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[r] Cave ibid. p. 624.

Thirdly, If we compare the principal Fathers of the fourth, with thoſe of the earlier ages; we ſhall obſerve the ſame characters of zeal and piety in them all, but more learning, more judgement, and leſs credulity in the later Fathers. If theſe then be found, either to have forged miracles themſelves; or to have propagated, what they knew to be forged; or to have been deluded ſo far by other people's forgeries, as to take them for real miracles; (of the one or the other of which, they were all unqueſtionably guilty) it will naturally excite in us, the ſame ſuſpicion of their predeceſſors; who, in the ſame cauſe, and with the ſame zeal, were leſs learned, and more credulous, and in greater need of ſuch arts for their defence and ſecurity.

Fourthly, As the perſonal characters of the earlier Fathers give them no advantage over their Succeſſors; ſo neither does the character of the earlier ages afford any real cauſe of preference, as to the point of their integrity, above the latter. The firſt indeed are generally called, and held to be *the pureſt:* but when they had once acquired that title, from the authority of a few leading men, it is not ſtrange, to find it aſcribed to them implicitly by every body elſe, without knowing or inquiring into the grounds of it. But whatever advantage of purity thoſe firſt ages may claim in ſome particular reſpects, it is certain, that they were defective in ſome others, above all, which have ſince ſucceded them. For there never was any period of time in all Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, in which ſo many *rank Hereſies* were publicly profeſſed [*t*], nor in which ſo many *ſpurious books* were forged and publiſhed by the Chriſtians, under the names of Chriſt, and the Apoſtles, and the Apoſtolic writers, as in thoſe primitive ages: ſeveral of which forged books are frequently cited and applied to the defence of Chriſtianity, by the moſt eminent Fathers of the ſame ages, as true and genuin pieces, and of equal authority, with the Scriptures themſelves [*u*]. And no man ſurely can doubt, but that thoſe, who would either forge, or make uſe of forged books, would in the ſame cauſe, and for the ſame ends, make uſe of forged miracles.

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[s] This will be particularly ſhewn in the courſe of my following argument.

[*t*] The learned, I think, have reckoned about ninety different Hæreſies, which all ſprang up within the three firſt centuries.

[*u*] See Archbiſhop *Wake*'s Preliminary Diſcourſe to the Genuin Epiſtles of the Apoſtolic Fathers, p. 89. where he has given us a liſt of a great part of thoſe ſpurious pieces, with a ſhort account of each —in which he tells us, *that it would be endleſs to inſiſt on all the ſpurious pieces, which were attributed onely to St. Paul*; *but that the ſuperſtitious books, aſcribed to St. Peter*, viz. his Acts, his Goſpel, his Preaching, his Revelations, *were of much greater authority even to the times of Euſebius.* [§. 18, 19.] He obſerves alſo, that the book called *the Recognitions of St. Clement*, which he takes to be *the moſt learned, as well as the moſt ancient of any of thoſe pieces, was not ſet forth till about the middle of the ſecond Century? and is rejected by Euſebius, as one of thoſe many impoſtures, which were even then publiſhed under the name of that Saint.* §. 28.

But the true character of theſe ages may beſt be learnt from one, who lived in the very midſt of them, and was himſelf the chief ornament of them, I mean St. *Cyprian*, who has left us the following account of the ſtate of the Church, juſt before the *Decian* perſecution; about *A. D.* 250, when it's diſcipline, as he ſays, was corrupted, and it's faith almoſt loſt, by the long eaſe and peace, which it had then enjoyed, for near forty years; during which interval, he tells us, " that the body of " Chriſtians ſtudied nothing, but how to increaſe their patri- " mony: and forgetting, what the faithful had done, either " in the times of the Apoſtles, or what they ought to do " at all times, had no other paſſion, but an inſatiable ardor, of " inlarging their fortunes. That there was no true devotion " in the Prieſts, no ſound faith in the miniſters: no mercy in " their works, no diſcipline in their manners: that the men " deſtroyed the comelineſs of their beards, and women of their " faces, by paint and falſe arts: their eyes alſo, ſo finiſhed by " the hand of God, were adulterated; and their hair ſtained " with colors, not their own. That the ſimple were deluded, " and the brethren circumvented by craft and fraud. That it " was common, to contract marriages with unbelievers: and " to proſtitute the members of Chriſt to the Gentiles: and " to ſwear not onely raſhly, but falſely: to contemn their " rulers with an inſolent pride; to ſpeak againſt them with " ſpite and rancour; and to quarrel among themſelves, with " an obſtinate hatred. That great numbers of the Biſhops, " who ought to be an example and leſſon to the reſt, contemn- " ing their divine Stewardſhip, made themſelves the ſtewards " of ſecular affairs; rambling about into other people's pro- " vinces; and ſeeking out the markets of traffic and gain; " and inſtead of relieving their hungry brethren in the Church,

" were eager onely, to heap up money; to ſeize people's lands " by treachery and fraud; and to increaſe their ſtock by exor" bitant uſury [x]."

This is the picture of thoſe ages, which people affect to call the *pureſt*, as it was drawn from the life, by the ableſt Maſter of the times, which he deſcribes: and tho' the character of the drawer muſt oblige us to believe, that it bore a great likeneſs to the original, yet it is ſo far from giving us any idea of purity or perfection, that if it had been drawn, even for our own times, we might juſtly think the coloring too coarſe, and the features charged beyond the truth.

Now from all theſe conſiderations taken together it muſt, I think, be allowed, that the forged miracles of the fourth century give us juſt reaſon to ſuſpect the pretenſions of every other age both before and after it. My argument would be much the ſame, if it were grounded on the allowed forgeries of any later age. Dr. *Chapman*, who defends the miracles of the fifth century, declares *that there were ſome of theſe later inſtances, as public, as clear and as well atteſted, as any in the earlier ages; and by an evidence, equal to that, by which moſt of the ancient miracles are ſupported* [y]. Dr. *Berriman*, in his defence of a particular miracle near the end of the ſame century, inſiſts, *that it cannot be diſcredited, without* ſhaking the whole faith of Hiſtory, and *rejecting all accounts of miracles, except thoſe of the Scriptures* [z]. And ſo far I agree with them both, and own their defence to be true; that the earlier miracles reſt on no better foundation, nor are ſupported by any better evidence, than the later: But then, if theſe later, after all the confidence of their Advocates, may certainly be diſcredited, and muſt conſequently be rejected; it follows from their own principles, that the earlier may, with as much reaſon, be rejected too. Which brings me at laſt to that general concluſion, which I have undertaken to illuſtrate; *that there is no ſufficient reaſon to believe, from the teſtimony of antiquity, that any miraculous powers did ever actually ſubſiſt in any age of the Church, after the times of the Apoſtles.*

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[x] De Lapſis. p. 170. Ed. Rigalt.

[y] Miſcell. Tracts, p. 170, 175.

[z] Serm. p. 327.

But this will be the proper buſineſs of the ſubſequent Treatiſe, in which, I ſhall endeavour to evince, by particular facts and teſtimonies, what this general view of the quæſtion, here given, and the reflections naturally ariſing from it, would previouſly diſpoſe us to ſuſpect; that the pretended miracles of the primitive Church were all mere fictions; which the pious and zealous Fathers, partly from a weak credulity, and partly, from reaſons of policy; believing ſome perhaps to be true, and knowing all of them to be uſeful, were induced to eſpouſe and propagate, for the ſupport of a righteous cauſe.

I have already obſerved, that many ſpurious books were forged in the earlieſt times of the Church, in the Names of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, which paſſed upon all the Fathers, as genuin and divine through ſeveral ſucceſſive ages. Now as the high authority of the Apoſtolic writings, and the zeal, with which they were ſought for by all Churches, was the motive, without doubt, which excited ſome of the ableſt, and moſt learned of the Chriſtians, to take the pains of forging and vending ſuch books under thoſe falſe titles; ſo the great fame and ſucceſs of the Apoſtolic miracles, would naturally excite ſome alſo of the moſt crafty, when the Apoſtles themſelves were dead, to attempt ſome juggling tricks in imitation of them, and by the pretence of a divine power, to impoſe upon that *ſimplicity and credulity*, which diſtinguiſhed the character of thoſe early ages. And [a] when theſe artful pretenders, by inſinuating themſelves chiefly in private houſes, or among the ignorant populace, had been able to maintain their ground through the three firſt centuries, the leading Clergy of the 4th, who were then eſtabliſhed by the civil power, and at liberty to apply all arts without reſerve to the converſion of the Heathens, underſtood their intereſt too well, to part with the old plea of miraculous gifts, which had been found ſo effectual, to dazzle the ſenſes and poſſeſs the minds of the multitude.

This ſeems to have been the general ſtate of the caſe in quæſtion: and though it may ſhock the prejudices of many, and claſh with the ſyſtems, which are commonly entertained; yet it will be found, I dare ſay, to be true, or leaſt the moſt probable; and as ſuch, the moſt uſeful alſo, to the real Defence of the Chriſtian cauſe. For, as far as miracles can evince the divinity of a religion, the pretenſions of Chriſtianity are confirmed by the evidence of ſuch, as of all others on record, are the leaſt liable to exception, and carry the cleareſt marks of their ſincerity; being wrought by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, for an end ſo great, ſo important, and ſo univerſally beneficial, as to be highly worthy of the interpoſition of the Deity; and wrought by the miniſtry of mean and ſimple men, in the open view of the people, as the teſtimonial of that divine miſſion, to which they pretended; and delivered to us by eye-witneſſes, whoſe honeſt characters exclude the ſuſpicion of fraud, and whoſe knowledge of the facts, which they relate, ſcarce admits the probability of a miſtake. This is the genuin ground on which Chriſtianity reſts; the hiſtory of our Saviour's doctrine and miracles, as it is declared and comprized within the cannon of the Holy Scriptures. Whenever we go beyond this, we weaken it's foundation, by endeavouring to inlarge it; and by recurring to an evidence leſs ſtrong and of doubtful credit, take pains onely, to render a good cauſe ſuſpected, and expoſe it to the perpetual ridicule of the Sceptics and Freethinkers.

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[a] The Primitive Chriſtians were perpetually reproached for their groſs *credulity* by all their enemies. *Celſus* ſays, that they *cared neither to receive, nor to give any reaſon of their faith*, and that it was an uſual ſaying with them, do *not examine, but believe only, and thy faith will ſave thee. Julian* affirms, *that the ſum of all their wiſdom was comprized in this ſingle precept, believe.* The Gentiles, ſays *Arnobius*, make it their conſtant buſineſs *to laugh at our faith, and to laſh our credulity with their facetious jokes.* Orig. con. Celſ. l. 1. p. 8, 9. Greg. Nazian. Invect. 1. Arnob. l. 2. p. 22, 23.

The Fathers, on the other hand, defend themſelves by ſaying, that they did nothing more on this occaſion, than what the Philoſophers had always done; that *Pythagoras*'s precepts were inculcated by an *Ipſe dixit*, and that they had found the ſame method uſeful with the vulgar, who were not at leiſure to examine things; whom they taught therefore *to believe, even without reaſons:* and that the Heathens themſelves, tho' they did not confeſs it in words, yet practiſed the ſame in their acts. *Ibid.*

Should our Infidels then be diſpoſed, to make themſelves merry with the miracles of a *Symeon Stylites*, or any other crack'd-brain monk of the 4th or 5th century, there is no reaſon for Dr. *Chapman* to be ſo angry with them [b]: let us ſuffer them to laugh on, and even laugh with them ourſelves; and by throwing out an empty tub to their ſport, ſecure the veſſel itſelf from their attacks. Or ſhould the Romaniſts, on the other hand, pretend to urge us with their miracles, and to ſhew the ſucceſſion of them from the earlieſt ages, we have no reaſon to be moved at it, but may tell them without ſcruple, that we admit no miracles, but thoſe of the Scriptures; and that all the reſt are either juſtly ſuſpected or certainly forged. By putting the controverſy on this iſſue, we ſhall either diſarm them at once, or if they perſiſt in the diſpute, may be ſure to convict them of fraud and impoſture: whereas by granting them but a ſingle age of miracles, after the times of the Apoſtles, we ſhall be entangled in a ſeries of difficulties, whence we can never fairly extricate ourſelves, till we allow the ſame powers alſo to the preſent age.

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[b] This *Symeon* (who acquired the name of *Stylites*, by a moſt extravagant whim, which he took, of ſpending the beſt part of his life on the top of a pillar, ſix and thirty cubits high) was a mad, enthuſiaſtic Monk of the 5th Century, to whom many monſtrous and ſuperſtitious acts are aſcribed, by the Eccleſiaſtical writers, as the effects of a divine inſpiration: all which Dr. *Chapman* moſt ſtrenuouſly and zealouſly defends, againſt the raillery of the Author of Chriſtianity as old as the Creation. See his Miſcell. Tracts, p. 165. §. 111.

And in truth, it has always been conſidered, as a fundamental principle of the Reformation, *that the Scriptures are a compleat rule both of faith and manners*; *and as ſuch are clear alſo and intelligible, in all fundamental points, to every private Chriſtian.* In this, all Proteſtant Churches agree, how much ſoever they may differ in any other article: and if this be true, then whatever be the characters of the antient Fathers, or whatever they may have taught, and practiſed in any age of the Church, is a matter wholly indifferent, and makes no part in the religion of a Proteſtant: and conſequently, no difference of judgement with regard to thoſe Fathers, ought to give any cauſe of offence or hatred among the members of that communion. For if the Scriptures are ſufficient, we do not want them as guides; or if clear, as interpreters. Every one therefore may enjoy his opinion of them, with the ſame liberty, as of any other writers whatſoever, with this caution onely; that an eſteem of them is apt to carry us too far, and has actually carried many into great and dangerous errors: whereas the neglect of them cannot be attended with any ill conſequence, ſince the Scriptures teach every thing, that is neceſſary, either to be believed or practiſed.

I cannot illuſtrate this principle ſo effectually, as by the following words of the excellent *Chillingworth*, who, of all men, beſt underſtood the real grounds of the controverſy, between the Proteſtants and the Papiſts.

" The Bible, I ſay, the Bible onely, is the religion of Pro-
" teſtants. Whatſoever elſe they believe beſides it, and the
" plain, irrefragable, indubitable conſequences of it, well may
" they hold it, as a matter of opinions, but as matter of faith
" and religion, neither can they, with coherence to their own
" grounds, believe it themſelves, nor require the belief of it of
" others, without moſt high and moſt ſchiſmatical preſump-
" tion. I, for my part, after a long, and (as I verily believe
" and hope) impartial ſearch of the *true way to eternal happineſs*,
" do profeſs plainly, that I cannot find any reſt for the ſole of
" my foot, but on this rock only. I ſee plainly, and with my
" own eyes, that there are Popes againſt Popes; Councils a-
" gainſt Councils; ſome Fathers againſt others; the ſame Fa-
" thers againſt themſelves; a conſent of Fathers of one age;
" againſt the conſent of Fathers of another age; the Church of
" one age, againſt the Church of another age: Traditive in-
" terpretations of Scripture are pretended, but there are none
" to be found. No tradition, but onely of Scripture can derive
" itſelf from the fountain, but may be plainly proved, either
" to have been brought in, in ſuch an age after Chriſt, or that
" in ſuch an age, it was not in. In a word, there is no ſuf-
" ficient certainty, but of Scripture onely, for any conſiderate
" man to build upon, &c."

But tho' this doctrine of the ſufficiency of the Scriptures be generally profeſſed through all the reformed Churches, yet it has happened, I know not how, in our own, that it's Divines have been apt on all occaſions, to join the authority of the primitive Church, to that of ſacred writ; to ſupply doctrines from the ancient Councils, in which the Scriptures are either ſilent or thought defective; to add the Holy Fathers, to the College of the Apoſtles; and by aſcribing the ſame gifts and powers to them both, to advance the primitive traditions, to a parity with Apoſtolic precepts.

Thus the late Dr. *Waterland*, who was ſuppoſed to ſpeak the ſenſe of our preſent Rulers, ſeldom appeals to the Scriptures in his controverſial writings, without joining antiquity to them, or the authority *of the three firſt centuries at leaſt*, that *golden age of Chriſtianity*, as he calls it [c]. " He declares, that the true interpretation of Scripture, cannot run counter, in things fun-" damental, to the judgement of the firſt and pureſt ages: that " to depreciate the value of Eccleſiaſtical Antiquity, and to " throw contempt on the primitive Fathers, is to wound Chri-" ſtianity through their ſides [d]: and that Chriſt never ſits ſo " ſecure and eaſy on his throne, as with theſe faithful guards " about him [e]; and he concludes his elaborate treatiſe on *the* " *uſe and value of Antiquity*, in theſe words.

" The ſum of what I have been endeavouring through this " whole chapter is, that Scripture and Antiquity (under the " conduct of right reaſon) are what we ought to abide by, in " ſettling points of doctrine. I have not put the caſe of Scripture

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[c] Import. of the Doctr. of the Trin. p. 426.

[d] Ibid. p. 395.

[e] Ibid. 396.

"and Antiquity interfering, or claſhing with each other; be-
"cauſe it is a caſe, which will never appear in points of im-
"portance, ſuch as this is, which we are now upon. How-
"ever, as to the general caſe, we may ſay, that thoſe two
"ought always to go together, and to concide with each other:
"and when they do ſo, they ſtand the firmer in their united
"ſtrength: but if ever they claſh, or appear to claſh, then un-
"doubtedly there is an error ſomewhere, like as when two ac-
"countants vary in caſting up the ſame ſum, *&c* [*f*]."

Here we ſee Antiquity joined as a neceſſary and inſeparable companion to the Scripture, and put even upon a level with it, by this eminent Advocate of the Chriſtian Faith. But ſince this ſeems to be a flat contradiction to the principles of the Reformation, and dangerous to the general credit and intereſts of the Proteſtant religion, it may be worth while to conſider a little, from what particular motives and circumſtances, ſo inconſiſtent a practice ſhould happen to prevail more remarkably in this, than in any other Proteſtant Church.

Our firſt and principal Reformers, in the reign of *Henry* the VIIIth, had not the power to carry the Reformation ſo far, as they deſired; nor to make ſuch changes in the old worſhip, as put them under a neceſſity of diſcarding the authority of the primitive Fathers; but on the contrary, were obliged againſt their wills, to comply ſtill with many rites and doctrines, which had no other foundation, but in that authority; which therefore, in thoſe circumſtances, they were forced to aſſert and defend. For how much ſoever they might be diſpoſed, to aboliſh ſuch rites, and the authority too, on which they ſtood, they were reſtrained by the will of an arbitrary Prince, who would not ſuffer them, to take the leaſt ſtep but by his immediate direction, and from his high conceit of his Theological learning, gave the law even to his Biſhops, in all the religious diſputes of thoſe days; and whoſe chief view after all was, to baniſh rather the power, than the religion of the Pope, out of his realm.

[*f*] Ibid. 465.

In the next reign of *Edward the ſixth*, tho' the ſame reforming Biſhops found themſelves at liberty, to carry on their great work to it's full perfection, yet for the ſake, either of their former conduct, and prejudices; or to preſerve a character of conſtancy; and to give the leſs ſcandal to the Clergy, who ſtill generally favoured the old forms; they endeavoured, as far as they were able, tho' ſometimes by forced and unnatural conſtructions, to juſtify all their procedings by the example and uſages of the ancient Fathers.

On the acceſſion therefore of Queen *Mary*, and the ſad cataſtrophe, which enſued, when the ſame Reformers, now doomed to be Martyrs, and eſpecially *Cranmer* and *Ridley*, (two Fathers of the Proteſtant Church, as truly venerable, as Chriſtianity perhaps has to boaſt of, ſince the times of the Apoſtles;) when theſe, I ſay, were brought out of their priſons, on pretence of holding public diſputations, but in truth, to be expoſed onely to the ſcoffs and contumelies of their cruel enemies; and when they had ſolidly evinced the truth of their doctrines, and baffled all the ſophiſtry of their opponents, by the clear and unanſwerable teſtimonies of the Scriptures, it grieves us after all, to ſee them labouring and gravelled, at a paſſage of *Chryſoſtom*, or *Ambroſe*, or *Hilary*, &c; and giving their adverſaries an occaſion of triumph, by ſubmitting to an authority, which was nothing to the purpoſe, and which in thoſe unhappy circumſtances, they were neither at liberty to reject, nor yet able to reconcile to their cauſe.

Queen *Elizabeth*, who next ſucceded, and finally eſtabliſhed the Reformation, affected to retain more pomp and ſplendor in the external part of religion, than many of her chief Divines approved; who, in compliance however with her humour, ſubmitted to ſeveral things, which they hoped in time to get rid of [*g*]. Her view was, to moderate the prejudices of the Popiſh Clergy; and to reconcile them by degrees to the new ſettlement, by leaving in it an outward ſhew, and ſome reſemblance of the old. From the ſame principle, a reverence was ſtill kept up to Antiquity; and appeals made on both ſides, to the primitive Fathers and ancient Councils, by the Profeſſors of the new, as well as of the old doctrines: which practice has been followed ever ſince, by the greateſt part of our leading Churchmen. But from the little ſucceſs which it has had, or ever can have, in our controverſies with the Papiſts, it is evident, that it cannot be conſidered in any other light, but as a vain oſtentation of learning, and an impatient zeal, to repel that charge of ignorance and contempt of primitive Antiquity, with which

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[*g*] In the Preamble of the Will of *Edw. Sandys*, Archbiſhop of *York*, who died *A. D.* 1588. there is the following paſſage relating to the rites and ceremonies of the Church, as they were then ſettled by public Authority.

"I am perſuaded, that ſuch, as are "now ſet down by public Authority—are "no way either ungodly or unlawful, but "may with good conſcience, for order and "obedience ſake be uſed.—So I have "ever been perſuaded, that ſome of them "be not ſo expedient for this Church, but "that they may better be diſuſed by little "and little, than more and more urged. "As I do eaſily acknowledge, that our "Eccleſiaſtical polity may in ſome points "be bettered—So I do utterly diſlike all "ſuch rude platforms, &c.

the Proteſtant Churches are conſtantly reproached by the Romaniſts.

In the two following reigns, the Popiſh intereſt began to raiſe it's head again in *England*. *James* the Firſt was a mere School-Divine, fond of theological diſputes; and tho' he wrote againſt the Papiſts, yet *being afraid of them*, as Biſhop *Burnet* ſays, *always acted for them* [h]. And *Charles the Firſt*'s Queen, who was a zealot to that religion, uſed all her power with the King, which was very great, to ſupport and propagate it's credit in the Kingdom, and to ſuſpend the rigor of the laws againſt it. " By the King's connivence, ſays the learned Dr.
" *Heylin*, and the Queen's indulgence, the Popiſh faction ga-
" thered not onely ſtrength, but confidence; multiplying in
" ſome numbers about the Court, and reſorting in a more open
" manner to the Maſſes at *Somerſet* Houſe; where the *Capuchins*
" had obtained a Chappel and Convent [i]." The leading Churchmen alſo, from a compliance with the principles of the Court, and an abhorrence of thoſe of the Puritans, ſeemed to have formed that ſenſeleſs project of a reconciliation with *Rome*, and made conſiderable advances towards it, by giving ſuch an interpretation to the doctrines and form to the diſcipline of our Church, as might invite all moderate Papiſts, to join with them in it's communion. But this compliance had no other effect, nor ever can have, than to weaken the Proteſtant cauſe, and to furniſh it's enemies with the greater power and means to oppreſs it. Nor did they fail to make their full advantage of it; by repreſenting it, " as a proof of the fickle and unſettled ſtate

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[h] See Biſhop *Burnet*'s Hiſtory of his Times, Vol. I. p. 11, 12.

[i] See Life of Archbiſhop *Laud* by Dr. *Pet. Heylin*. Par. 2. l. iv. p. 337.

" of the *Engliſh* Church, that it was grown ſick, as it were, " and weary of itſelf, and could find no reſt in the novelties, " which it had embraced, but was returning apace to it's old " principles, and reſuming many of the rites and doctrines, for " which it had forſaken the Church of *Rome*." All this was urged with great force againſt our *Chillingworth*, by that ſubtil Jeſuit, Mr. *Knot*; and exemplified by him in many particulars, which the learned Dr. *Heylin*, who was perfectly acquainted with the eccleſiaſtical principles of that age, and a ſtrenuous eſpouſer of them, declares to be true, in the following words, drawn from his Life of *Archbiſhop Laud.*

" If you will take the character of the Church of *England*, " ſays he, from the pen of a Jeſuit, you ſhall find him ſpeaking, among other falſehoods, theſe undoubted truths; *viz.* that " the Profeſſors of it, they eſpecially of greateſt worth, learning, and authority, love temper and moderation; that the " doctrines are altered in many Things; as for example, The " Pope not Antichriſt; Pictures, free-will, predeſtination, " univerſal grace, inherent righteouſneſs; the preferring of " charity before knowledge; the merit, or reward rather of " good works; the thirty nine articles ſeeming patient, if not " ambitious alſo of ſome catholic ſenſe; that their Churches " begin to look with a new face; their walls to ſpeak a new " language; and ſome of their Divines to teach, that the " Church hath authority in determining controverſies of faith, " and interpreting the Scriptures; that men, in talk and writing, uſe willingly the once fearful names of Prieſts and Altars, and are now put in mind, that for the expoſition of " Scripture, they *are by Canon bound to follow the Fathers.*—So

" far the Jeſuit, ſays he, may be thought to ſpeak nothing but " truth [k]."

It is needleſs to deſcend to the later reigns; or to obſerve, how far the diſcipline and principles of *Archbiſhop Laud* were adopted again at the Reſtoration; or what credit they ſtill obtain with ſome of the principal Clergy of our own times; ſince this can hardly eſcape the notice of all, who pay any attention to Eccleſiaſtical affairs. But there is another circumſtance, that I muſt not omit to mention, as it is peculiar to our Church, and from Queen *Elizabeth*'s time down to our own, has had no ſmall influence on it's principles and practice, and which will always keep up amongſt us a full reſpect to Eccleſiaſtical antiquity. I mean thoſe unhappy diſſenſions among the Proteſtants of this nation, which have ſplit them into different ſects and ſeparate communions. For in theſe diſputes, which wholly turn on points of diſcipline, and external forms of worſhip, as the authority of the Fathers, whatever weight it ought to have is moſtly on the ſide of the eſtabliſhed Church, ſo the Church will always be diſpoſed to ſupport that authority, which helps it to depreſs a ſet of men, who, though agreeing with it in eſſentials, and diſſenting only about things indifferent, are yet more odious, than the Papiſts themſelves, to all the zealous advocates, and warm admirers of the primitive Fathers.

Theſe ſeem to have been the chief reaſons, which from the time even of our reformation, have advanced the credit of Eccleſiaſtical antiquity to an higher pitch in this kingdom, than in any other Proteſtant country. Which ſame principles, by the encouragement which they have generally received from our Governors are now carried, as we have ſeen, to an heigth, that muſt needs alarm all ſerious Proteſtants, as they have no other tendency, nor can have any other effect, but to throw us again into the arms of the *Romiſh* Church. For I have long been of opinion, that the ſucceſs, which their Miſſionaries have ever found in this Iſland, and which of late has been more particularly complained of, is chiefly owing, to thoſe high notions of the primitive diſcipline, and that great reverence for the ancient Fathers, which are entertained and propagated by a great part of our Clergy. For by agreeing with the Romaniſts thus far, and joining with them in a common appeal to primitive antiquity, we allow all, which they can fairly draw from it, to be ſound and orthodox; and though in the end, they may not perhaps gain every thing, which they aim at, yet they will be ſure always, to come off with great advantage.

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[k] See Ibid. p. 238. and the Life alſo, of Mr. *Chillingworth* by Monſieur Des Maizeaux, p. 113. Not. (AA.)

Mr. *Chillingworth* himſelf is a memorable example of this truth: who, in his account of the ſeveral motives, which induced him to embrace the *Romiſh* faith, mentions the two following;

" Becauſe, if any credit may be given to as creditable
" records, as any are extant, the doctrine of Catholics hath
" been frequently confirmed, and the oppoſite doctrine of
" Proteſtants confounded, with ſupernatural and divine mi-
" racles.

“ Becauſe the doctrine of the church of *Rome* is conformable,
“ and the doctrine of Proteſtants contrary, to the doctrine of
“ the Fathers, even by the confeſſion of Proteſtants themſelves:
“ I mean thoſe Fathers, who lived within the compaſs of the
“ firſt ſix hundred years; to whom Proteſtants do very fre-
“ quently and very confidently appeal [*l*].”

Theſe ſeem to have been the principal arguments, which abuſed this great man, as he expreſſes it, and hurried him into the Church of *Rome*. *Silly Sophiſms*, as he afterwards calls them, *grounded on miſtakes and falſe ſuppoſitions, which he unadviſedly took for granted* [*m*]. Till upon a clear view of the errors, into which they had drawn him, he perceived, that the means could not be pure, when the end was ſo corrupt, and found no other way of retrieving his miſtake, and becoming Proteſtant again, but by diſcarding thoſe fallacious records, and fictitious miracles, which had ſeduced him, and committing himſelf to the ſole guidance, and infallible authority of the holy Scriptures. On this foundation, he has built the moſt ſolid and rational defence of the Proteſtant cauſe, which has ever been offered to the public ſince the Reformation. Yet our Champions of theſe days are employing all their ſkill, to demoliſh what he had built, and to adopt again into the ſyſtem of our faith, all that he had thrown out of it; all the nonſenſe, the ſuperſtition, and the pious frauds of the primitive ages; nor will they allow us even to be Chriſtians, but on thoſe very principles, which muſt finally make us Papiſts.

[*l*] See Pref. to Charity maintained, §. 43. in *Chillingworth*'s Works, ſeventh Edition.

[*m*] See ibid. §. 42.

The deſign of the preſent treatiſe, is to give ſome check to the current of this zeal, and to fix the religion of Proteſtants on its proper baſis, that is, on the ſacred Scriptures; not on the authority of weak and fallible men, the detection of whoſe errors, and the ſuſpicion of whoſe frauds would neceſſarily give a wound to Chriſtianity itſelf; which yet in reality, is no more concerned or affected by the characters of the antient, than of the modern Fathers of the Church. But to declare my opinion in ſhort on the real value of thoſe primitive writers, I freely own them to be of ſome uſe and ſervice on ſeveral accounts.

1ſt, In atteſting and tranſmitting to us the genuin books of the holy Scriptures. Yet this is not owing to any particular ſanctity or ſagacity of thoſe antient times, but to the notoriety of the thing, and the authority with which the books themſelves were received from their firſt publication, in all Churches: whence they have ſince been handed down to us, in the ſame manner, as the works of all other antient writers, by the perpetual tradition of ſucceſſive ages, whether pure or corrupt, learned or unlearned.

2dly, Their more immediate and proper uſe, is, to teach us the doctrines, the rites, the manners, and the learning of the ſeveral ages, in which they lived: yet as witneſſes onely, not as guides: as declaring, what was then believed, not what was true; what was practiſed, not what ought to be practiſed: ſince their works abound with inſtances of fooliſh, falſe and dangerous opinions, univerſally maintained and zealouſly propagated by them all.

Laſtly, Their very errors alſo afford an uſe and profitable leſſon to us: for the many corruptions, which crept into the Church in thoſe very early ages, are a ſtanding proof and admonition to all the later ages, that there is no way of preſerving a purity of faith and worſhip in any Church, but by reviewing them from time to time, and reducing them to the original teſt and ſtandard of the holy Scriptures.

POSTSCRIPT.

AFTER I had finiſhed this Introductory treatiſe, and was preparing to ſend it to the preſs, I happened to meet with an Archidiaconal charge, delivered to the Clergy at a viſitation, by the ſame learned Dr. *Chapman*, whom I have had frequent occaſion to mention, in the courſe of my argument. And ſince this charge is of a ſingular kind, and bears ſome relation to the ſubject of the preſent inquiry, with regard both to *Popery* and *Primitive Antiquity*, the reader, I hope, will excuſe me, if I detain him here a while, with a few ſhort remarks upon it.

The Archdeacon enters directly into the matter of his ſpeech; and inſtead of congratulating with his reverend brethren, on their deliverance from the *late rebellion*, drops but a ſlight hint on that, as the prelude onely to *another plot*, of a more dreadful and fatal kind which he is in haſt to communicate; the laſt effort of *ſubtil Jeſuits*, *who ſeeing every other method baffled and ineffectual*, *reſolved to try a new*, *though bold expedient for their Church*; *more big*, he ſays, *with peſt and confuſion*, *than all the former devices of their party againſt us*; *ſtriking deciſively at the very root of the Reformation*, *and at the baſis of all proteſtant Churches*; *and ſecretly working*, *at this very time*, *incredible miſchief againſt our whole religion* [a] Then as to *the Leader in this Plot*, he deſcribes him like another *Catiline*; *furniſhed with every great talent*, *proper for the purpoſe*; *an head acute and prolific*; *learning extenſive and various*; *language dogmatical and lively*; *a zeal never deſtitute of addreſs*, *and*

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[a] See page 1, 2, 3.

and length of days, attending conſtant ſtudies and vivacity of genius: in ſhort, with every art, to draw every creature; Papiſt and Proteſtant; zealot and freethinker, into his ſcheme [b].

After ſuch an exordium, one cannot help figuring to himſelf what a ſurprize, ſo ſtrange a piece of news muſt needs excite in this reverend Aſſembly, to find themſelves expoſed again ſo unexpectedly, to the effects of ſo direful a conſpiracy; and what an impatience it would create, to hear the reſt, and to learn, by what arts and inſtruments, this calamity was to be brought upon them; which the Archdeacon procedes to diſcloſe in the following manner:

That *there were certain Loyolites in* France, *who had aſſumed of a ſudden a new character, and blazed out moſt faſtidious Hypercritics:* that theſe had entered into a vow, to deprive us of all our learning and religion at once, and *by one deſperate furious puſh, to ſtab the proteſtant cauſe to the heart, with the admired ſpirit of incredulity and freethinking:* that their method of doing it was; to make all the world believe, that *the ancient writers of* Greece *and* Rome, *were either figments, or worthleſs triflers; and by that means, to confound and diſſipate all our notions in Chronology, Hiſtory, Laws, uſages, doctrines eccleſiaſtical and prophane, together with the genius and vitals of all the dead languages:* that, in the execution of this deſign, they had already gone ſo far, *as to reproach* Thucydides *and* Xenophon *very tartly, with modern Galliciſms and ſuſpicious phraſeologies; and had ſuperciliouſly laſhed all the reſt;* Diodorus, Polybius, Dionyſius *of* Halicarnaſſus, Livy, Juſtin, Suetonius, Quintilian, Tacitus, Plutarch, Athenæus, Dion

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[b] Page 11, 12, 18, &c.

Caſſius, *with multitudes of others, as mere counterfeit Romances; the works of recent Sophiſts, Impoſtors, and Fabulators* [c].

And leſt any one ſhould interrupt him here, and aſk; how *the proteſtant cauſe could be ruined and our whole religion overturned,* by the loſs onely of theſe *Pagan writers,* he clears up that doubt in the following words, by declaring; that this blow, *how daring ſoever, was but the introduction to the fatal ſtroke, which was to inſue; for that the* Clements, *the* Chryſoſtoms, *the* Jeroms, *and the* Auſtins, *were to fall the next in this maſſacre; and the ancient Councils themſelves, both general and provincial, would not long ſurvive them* [d].

This is the ſubſtance of his plot, as it is ſet forth by himſelf. For if we *could penetrate the very marrow,* as he ſays, or, in a metaphor ſtill more elegant, *the very vitals of the dead languages themſelves,* we could not find any words, ſo well ſuited to his ſubject, or ſo adapted, to ſpread wonder and amazement thro' an Aſſembly, as his own. As to the ſucceſs of the plot, he repreſents it every where, as moſt eaſy and probable. For the Papiſts would favour it of courſe, as it could not fail of reducing all Chriſtendom under the abſolute power of *Rome*; and *the Proteſtants, among whom a fantaſtical paſſion for novelties, and a briſk giddy ſpirit of Pyrrhoniſm was riſing very faſt* [e], *would rejoice at any blow given to eccleſiaſtical hiſtory and the Scriptures, and readily give up even their favourite* Virgils *and* Horaces, *&c. on condition only, that the* Jeroms *might be ſacrificed at the ſame time* [f].

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[c] See pag, 3, 4, 5.

[d] Page 6.

[e] Page 12.

[f] Page 22, 23.

Now whatever ſurprize the firſt opening of this ſpeech might give, either to the hearer or reader, the concluſion, I dare ſay, will give as great, to find *this crafty projection*, as he calls it, which he has been dreſſing up with ſuch ſolemnity and laboured pomp of words, as a moſt deſperate plot of the Romiſh Church, to be nothing at laſt but the ſtale and ſenſeleſs whim of a ſingle old Jeſuit, formed by no concert or confederacy with any ſet of men in the world, and publiſhed about forty years ago without any other effect whatſoever, than of being laughed at ever ſince by all men of ſenſe, and particularly contemned at *Rome*, as I have been certainly informed, as the mere delirium of a doting Critic.

One would not eaſily conceive, at the firſt thought, what ſhould put it into this Archdeacon's head, to think of alarming the Provincial Clergy, at this time of day, with the vain terrors of ſuch an exploded and obſolete tale. But this ſcheme was artfully laid, and the time exactly hit by him. He ſaw, that a *Panic* was ſpread over the land; that people's heads were filled with nothing, but conſpiracies and Popiſh invaſions; that this was the moment, to make a figure with his plot, and if the diſcovery was poſtponed, the merit of it would be loſt. *He ſtruck in roundly* therefore, as he expreſſes it, *and like a true man of craft, with this taſte and turn of the age* [g]; and ſnatched the opportunity of diſplaying his abilities before his reverend brethren, and while he was rouſing all their fears, of adminiſtering comfort to them at the ſame time, by ſhewing; what a champion they had got to defend them; that the old Jeſuit himſelf could not outdo him, in thoſe very talents of his, which he had been enumerating; *the acuteneſs of his prolific head*; *the extent of*

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[g] See page 12.

his various learning; *the force of his dogmatical language:* and that the Freethinkers were nothing to him, even in their own arts, and the management of thoſe *everlaſting arms of theirs*, in which their ſtrength lay; *the alertneſs of their ſneers*; *their affectation of appearing ſignificant in erudition, and their fluent pompous ſhew of ſome depth in letters* [h].

But ſurely, no *Archidiaconal Charge* was ever more learnedly trifling, or pompouſly abſurd than this. He confeſſes, that this conceit of the Jeſuit raiſed ſo general *an outcry againſt it, among the Papiſts themſelves, that he was obliged to recant it, as ſoon almoſt as it was divulged*; *that his own Society of the Jeſuits publiſhed a formal proteſtation againſt it* [i]; *and that the learned of all the other Orders both in* France *and* Italy, *ſharply declared their abhorrence of it* [k]. Yet this deſpicable project of a cloiſtered viſionary, conceived ſo many years ago, retracted by himſelf, cenſured by his own Order, and abhorred by all the other Orders of *France* and *Italy*, is here puffed and dreſſed out by our Archdeacon, in an Aſſembly of Engliſh Clergy, as a moſt dreadful plot, ſpreading it's infection far and wide, threatening ruin to our whole religion, *fire and ſword to all Proteſtants* [l].

In opening the evidences of this plot, he declares from his own knowledge, *that it was certainly begun, and is carried on to this day, with art and ſucceſs*; *and is aſſiſted alſo by a favourable concurrence of circumſtances in this very age* [m]: *that one great man in* France *had loudly proclamed a very high eſteem for the author: that another perſon at* Amſterdam *had the confidence to ſuppoſe gravely*,

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[h] See page 22, 23.

[i] (Note †).

[k] Pag. 20.

[l] Pag. ibid.

[m] See pag. xi.

even in print, that the Jeſuit's new ſyſtem would bear a debate among the learned, and by degrees gain a ſtrong, if not the ableſt party to it's ſide [*n*]*:* and if any farther proof be required, he aſſures us, *that though it may juſtly ſeem ſo extravagant and chimerical, as to make ſome good men believe it incapable of doing any miſchief, yet he can prove, on the contrary, that it has already ſpread a taint too far: among ſome, for catholic advantages, among others, for want of knowing that ſecret, or from paſſionate biaſſes to their coins, or to favour their Pyrrhoniſm* [*o*].

The reader will be apt to wonder here again, why our Archdeacon is not more explicit and particular in declaring his proofs, in a cauſe, which, of all others, ſeems to want them the moſt. *He knows, that the plot is carried on with ſucceſs to this day*; *and can prove*, he ſays, *that it has ſpread a taint too far:* yet after he has prepared us, to expect the hiſtory and progreſs of the infection, and what particular perſons it has tainted in this and that nation; he drops all that at once, as if there were ſome latent ſore in it, too tender for him to touch. But it is not very difficult to gueſs at the reaſon: it is his great regard for certain good friends of his whom he is loth to impeach, as accomplices in this *Jeſuitical plot*, which yet he muſt neceſſarily do, whenever he is forced to ſpeak out; I mean the *Tunſtalls* and the *Marklands* of our own country: who, with that ſame *malignant ſpirit againſt the ancients*, of which he talks [*p*], have been lately making the ſame *deſperate furious puſh*, in this very proteſtant land, to deprive us *of the works of* Cicero, by adding them to the Jeſuit's liſt of *counterfeit romances*, and ſhewing them to be *the fragments of thoſe ſame buſy Sophiſts and recent Fabulators.*

[*n*] Pag. 19.

[*o*] Pag. xi. 20.

[*p*] Page 17. Note [†].

lators. For of all the learned in this kingdom, there are none, who, like the *Loyolites of France*, have ventured, *to aſſume that new character*, *of blazing and faſtidious Hypercritics*, or have puſhed *their proteſtant Pyrrhoniſm* ſo far, as they.

Yet after all, which I have been ſaying of the Archdeacon's Speech, I muſt do him the juſtice to own, that there are many obſervations occaſionally interſperſed in it, both excedingly curious, and intirely new. I ſhall juſt give one of them, as a ſpecimen of the reſt; by which he informs his reverend brethren, *that the real neceſſaries of learned authors, in theſe times of ours, are extremely great; nay almoſt infinitely ſo, beyond any thing, which the multitude can imagine* [q.] This is a diſcovery ſo recondite, and remote from vulgar apprehenſion, that it could not poſſibly be made by any, but himſelf. For, though his modeſty would fain conceal it, he is but drawing his own picture, under the character, which he gives of *thoſe great lights and pillars, of Proteſtantiſm, whom he propoſes to the Clergy as patterns of their ſtudies: men, who ſpent their whole lives in the purſuit of erudition, penetrated the very marrow of all the learned languages, traverſed, with the ſame zeal, every ancient, and monument they could find, had all antiquity before them in one grand comprehenſive view, and attain to that abounding richneſs in learning which rendered them the glories of their age, and a ſcourge and terror to any bold ſuperficial pretenders, who ſhould offer to impoſe upon the public any miſchievous ſophiſtries or chicane of ſcience* [r]. For, how could any man know, the real neceſſaries of ſuch *deep ſcholars*, as theſe, if he himſelf was not as profound, as they? or how indeed can any one elſe, reach even the ſenſe of ſo deep a diſcovery; for as to thoſe *bold and ſuperficial pretenders*, whom he juſtly derides, for ſkimming onely

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[q] See pag. 26.

[r] Pag. 27, 28.

the ſurface of literature, *and contenting themſelves, as he tells us, with a few ſelect authors, the moſt eminent, and elegant in each claſs* [s]; they would be apt to pronounce at once, that there is no ſenſe at all in it.

But, if I may preſume to offer my opinion, the ſenſe of it, I think, will be found clear and good by a due attention to the context; in which the Archdeacon, having firſt taken occaſion to declare, *that our Church is far inferior to the Romiſh in the proviſion of emoluments for the clergy*, artfully introduces his obſervation, by way of complaint, or petition, as it were, to the public, on behalf of himſelf, and all the other learned authors, among the Clergy, that, whereas their learning, in theſe proteſtant days, is infinitely ſuperior, to what it was in the Popiſh, yet our Governors do not conſider, that *their real neceſſaries* are increaſed to them likewiſe, in the ſame proportion. For though he has not given any reaſons, to confirm this, yet the truth of it may be demonſtrated by a known and memorable fact. For inſtance; *Eraſmus*, an *Author*, competently *learned*, for thoſe Popiſh times, was ſupplied with all *real neceſſaries*, and a large overplus beſides, from one ſingle benefice, conferred upon him by an *Archbiſhop of Canterbury:* Our Archdeacon, on the contrary, in theſe proteſtant times, holds the ſame benefice, which *Eraſmus* then held, with a ſecond ſtill better, and the profits of an Archdeaconry into the bargain, yet out of *the infinite ſuperiority of his learning*, wants the addition ſtill of more preferment, *to ſupply his infinite want of real neceſſaries.*

But I am drawn inſenſibly too far, and waſting too much time in pointing out the ſolemn trifles, and elaborate nonſenſe of this ſtrange ſpeech. My chief purpoſe, in taking notice of it, was of a more ſerious kind; to ſhew, by the example of this very performance, to what poor ſhifts this *Defender of the primitive monks, and their miracles,* will naturally be reduced, whenever he finds it expedient, to give a public teſtimony of his zeal againſt *Rome*; and while he pretends to be fighting againſt Popery, how he will be driven, by the force of his principles, to make but a mock-fight of it, a mere theatrical ſhew, and to combat onely phantaſms of his own dreſſing up.

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[s] Pag. 27.

This, I ſay, is the neceſſary conſequence of his principles; of *that ſuperſtitious veneration of the primitive Fathers, and that implicit faith in Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory,* which it has been the buſineſs of his life and ſtudies, to inculcate. For I have already ſhewn, by facts and inſtances produced in this Introductory treatiſe, how thoſe Divines of our Church, who carry the authority of the Fathers ſo high, as to make them *the guides and interpreters of our religion,* and who *appeal to them eſpecially in our controverſies with the Papiſts,* preclude themſelves of courſe, from attacking any of thoſe principal corruptions, for the ſake of which, the Proteſtants found it neceſſary, to ſeparate themſelves from the communion of *Rome*. Yet our Archdeacon maintains ſtill, as we have ſeen, in this ſpeech, that the Antient Fathers and Primitive Councils, the *Clements*, the *Chryſoſtoms*, the *Jeroms*, and the *Auſtins*, are the very bulwarks of Proteſtantiſm, and the inſtruments, through which *we may moſt glaringly expoſe to every common eye, the unſcriptural and unprimitive crudities of the Romiſh Church* [t].

Now, as in all diſputes, the readieſt way to find out the truth, is, by reducing them, as far as it is poſſible, to queſtions of fact, and to the trial of our ſenſes, ſo in this, I ſhall refer myſelf to a fact, which I have endeavoured to exemplify in the foregoing work, with regard to thoſe very Fathers, to whom the Archdeacon appeals; and particularly, to *Chryſoſtom*, *Jerom* and *Auſtin*; concerning whom, I have there affirmed, and do now again affirm, *that they have all ſeverally taught, and practiſed, and warmly recommended to the practice of all Chriſtians, certain rites and doctrines, which, upon their authority, and example, are received and practiſed at this day by the Romiſh Church, but condemned and rejected by Proteſtant Churches, as unſcriptural, ſuperſtitious and idolatrous.* If the Archdeacon allows this fact, every one will ſee at once, without aſking his opinion any farther, on which ſide thoſe Fathers are to be ranged: if he denies it, he muſt deny at the ſame time, that thoſe paſſages, which I have produced in proof of it, are really to be found in them; or otherwiſe, in ſpite of any diſtinction or comment, which he can frame upon them, every man of ſenſe will allow the fact to be true.

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[t] See pag. 2, &c.

But of all the primitive Fathers, *Jerom* ſeems to be the peculiar favorite of our Archdeacon, and, as we may collect from this very ſpeech, is ſuppoſed by him, to be of more eminent ſervice to us than any of them, both againſt the *Papiſts* and the *Freethinkers:* for which reaſon, I have choſen to employ the few pages, that remain, in conſidering his particular merit and principles a little more preciſely: and with that view, ſhall propoſe another fact or two, drawn from his writings; which will enable the reader to form a clear judgement of his character, as far as it relates to the point, now in diſpute, between the Archdeacon and myſelf.

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This *Jerom* then, as I have obſerved in the foregoing work, was a moſt zealous admirer and promotor of the *monkiſh life*; and, for the ſake of advancing it's credit in the world, wrote the lives of two celebrated Monks; the one called *Paul*, and the other *Hilarion*; in which, after he has invoked *that ſame Holy ſpirit, which inſpired the ſaid Monks, to inſpire him alſo with language, equal to the wonderous acts, which he was going to relate,* he has inſerted a number of tales, and miracles, ſo groſſly fabulous, as not to admit the leaſt doubt, of their being abſolute forgeries. The *Life of Paul* was publiſhed the firſt, and, as we learn from *Jerom* himſelf, was treated, as a *mere fable*, by the Freethinkers, or *Scyllæan dogs*, as he calls them, of thoſe days [*u*]. Nor is it conſidered at this day in any other character, or mentioned by the learned on any other account, than as a proof, of *that paſſion for fiction and impoſture, which poſſeſſed the Fathers of the 4th century* [*x*]. Now whether *Jerom* forged theſe tales himſelf, or propagated what he knew to be forged by others, or whether he really believed them, and publiſhed onely, what he took to be true; our Archdeacon may chuſe which he pleaſes, I ſhall not diſpute it with him, ſince the fact, which I would lay before the reader, and with which alone, we are at preſent concerned, is unconteſtable, *that it was one of the principal views of* Jerom's *zeal and writings, to recommend to all Chriſtians*, as the perfection of the Chriſtian life, a ſpecies of monkery, not onely abhorred by Proteſtants, but, in my opinion, more contemptible and ſuperſtitious, than any that is profeſſed at this day in the Church of *Rome*.

[*u*] Unde & nos—cœptum ab eo opus aggredientes, maledicorum voces contemnimus: qui olim detrahentes *Paulo meo*, nunc ſorte detrahent Hilarioni———verum deſtinato operi imponam manum & *Scyllæos canes* obturata aure tranſibo. Prolog. in vit. S. Hilarion. Op. T. 4. par. 2. p. 74.

[*x*] Quam fuerint quarti ſeculi Scriptores fabulis dediti, e vita *Pauli Hieronymiana, ex Athanaſiana Antonii, &c.* intelligimus. Dodw. Diſſert. in Irenæum 2. §. LV.

Again, *Jerom*, as I have intimated alſo above, wrote a little piece or two againſt *Vigilantius*, in which he treats him, as a moſt blaſphemous Heretic, and gives us all the particular articles of his hæreſy, drawn from *Vigilantius*'s own words, to the following effect.

" That the honors paid to the rotten bones and duſt of the " ſaints and martyrs, by adoring, kiſſing, wrapping them up " in ſilk and veſſels of gold, lodging them in their Churches and " lighting up wax candles before them, after the manner of the " Heathens, were the inſigns of Idolatry [*y*].

" That the Cœlibacy of the Clergy was an Hæreſy, and their " vows of chaſtity the ſeminary of lewdneſs [*z*].

" That to pray for the dead, or to deſire the prayers of the " dead, was ſuperſtitious: and that the Souls of the departed " Saints and Martyrs were at reſt, in ſome particular place, " whence they could not remove themſelves at pleaſure, ſo " as to be preſent every where to the prayers of their vota- " ries [*a*].

[*y*] Ais *Vigilantium*——os fœtidum rurſus aperire, & putorem ſpurciſſimum contra Sanctorum Martyrum proferre reliquias, & nos, qui eas ſuſcipimus, appellare cinerarios & idolatras, qui mortuorum hominum Oſſa veneramur, &c. Vide Hieron. Op. T. 4. par. 2. p. 278, 279. 282, &c.

[*z*] Dicit——continentiam, hæreſim; pudicitiam, libidinis ſeminarium. ibid. p. 281.

[*a*] Ais enim vel in ſinu Abrahæ, vel in loco refrigerii, vel ſubter aram Dei animas Apoſtolorum & Martyrum conſediſſe, nec poſſe de ſuis tumulis, & ubi voluerint, adeſſe præſentes——dicis in libello tuo, quod dum vivimus, mutuo pro nobis orare poſſumus; poſtquam autem mortui fuerimus, nullius ſit pro alio ex audienda oratio, &c. ibid p. 283, &c.

" That the Sepulchres of the Martyrs ought not to be wor-
" ſhipped, nor their faſts and vigils to be obſerved [b].

" That the ſigns and wonders, ſaid to be wrought by their
" reliques, and at their Sepulchres, ſerved to no good end or
" purpoſe of religion [c]."

Theſe were the *ſacrilegious* tenets, as *Jerom* calls them, which he could not *hear with patience, or without the utmoſt grief* [d]; and for which he declares *Vigilantius to be a moſt deteſtable heretic, venting his foul-mouthed blaſphemies againſt the reliques of the Martyrs, which were working daily ſigns and wonders. He bids him, go into the Churches of thoſe Martyrs, and he would be cleanſed from the evil ſpirit, which poſſeſſed him, and feel himſelf burnt, not by thoſe wax candles, which ſo much offended him, but by inviſible flames, which would force that Dæmon who talked within him, to confeſs himſelf to be the ſame, who had perſonated a Mercury, perhaps, or a Bacchus, or ſome other of their Gods among the Heathens* [e]. At which wild rate, this good Father raves on, through ſeveral pages, in a ſtrain much more furious, than the moſt bigotted Papiſt would uſe at this day, in the defence of the ſame rites.

Let our Archdeacon then ſpeak directly to this fact, and tell us, which of theſe two is acting here the Proteſtant part, and ſerving the Proteſtant cauſe: whether it be *Jerom* or *Vigilantius*: whether the *Primitive Father*, who, by *lies* and *forgeries*, ſo fiercely maintains the honor of *monkery* and *reliques*; or the *Primitive Heretic*, who, by the Principles of reaſon and the Goſpel, ſo firmly rejects them.

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[b] Qui Martyrum neget ſepulcra veneranda, damnandas dicit eſſe vigilias—Ibid. 281.

[c] Argumentatur contra ſigna & virtutes, quæ in Baſilicis Martyrum fiunt, p. 285.

[d] Fatebor tibi dolorem meum. Sacrilegium tantum, patienter audire non poſſum, p. 280.

[e] Ingredere baſilicas Martyrum, & aliquando purgaberis: invenies ibi multos focios tuos, & nequaquam cereis Martyrum, qui tibi diſplicent, ſed flammis inviſibilibus combureris—&c. p. 286.

But he has told us already in his ſpeech, that the *Jeroms* are the men, who muſt enable us, to expoſe *the unprimitive crudities of the Romiſh principles and practices:* and he will try again, perhaps on this occaſion, what he has tried with ſucceſs on others, to accommodate theſe very facts to his own ſyſtem: and by an art, which he has learnt from *Jerom* himſelf, will teach us, " that we ought to diſtinguiſh between *the dogmatical and the* " *agoniſtical ſtile*; that in the firſt, indeed, truth is the object " aimed at, but in the ſecond, nothing but victory; that ſin- " cerity therefore is neceſſary in the one, but art onely in the " other: that *Jerom* was not here dogmatizing, but fighting " with an enemy; and in that caſe, according to his cuſtom, " not ſaying what he thought true, but what was neceſſary to " his cauſe, and catching up any words, to throw at him, " which would beſt ſerve, to knock him down: then he will " cry out again, in the ſame lamentable ſtile, *that this is not* " *the firſt time, that poor St.* Jerom *has been thus mangled and miſre-* " *preſented* [*f*]; that I have ſuppreſſed the very expreſſions, " which would have cleared up the matter and juſtified the " purity of his principles; for when *Vigilantius* charges him " with Idolatry, for worſhipping rotten bones, in the manner " above-mentioned, that I had omitted to acquaint the reader, " how *Jerom* denies the charge, and declares, *that they paid no* " *divine worſhip to any thing but to God, that by honoring the re-*

[*f*] Honoramus autem reliquias Martyrum, ut eum, cujus ſunt Martyres, adoremus. Honoramus ſervos, ut honor ſervorum redundet ad Dominum; qui ait; qui vos ſuſcipit, me ſuſcipit. Hieron. Op. T. 4. par. 2. p. 279.

“ *liques of the Martyrs, they meant to adore him, whoſe Martyrs* “ *they were*; *and gave honor to the ſervants, that the honor of the* “ *ſervants might redound to their Lord,* who ſays, *he that receiveth* “ *you receiveth me* [g].” And what is this after all, but the ſame trifling and evaſive diſtinction, with which the *Romaniſts* defend the ſame practices at this day, and ſhift off that charge of Idolatry, which is urged againſt them by the Heretical Proteſtants?

But to purſue this point a little farther. There is another ſhort paſſage, in the ſame work of *Jerom,* where he urges *Vigilantius,* in the following manner: “ That if it were ſuch a ſa- “ crilege, or impiety, as *Vigilantius* contends, to pay thoſe ho- “ nors to the reliques of the Saints; then *the Emperor Conſtantius* “ muſt needs be a ſacrilegious perſon, who tranſlated the *holy* “ *reliques of Andrew, Luke, and Timothy, to Conſtantinople:* then “ *Arcadius Auguſtus* alſo muſt be held ſacrilegious, who tranſ- “ lated the bones of *the bleſſed Samuel* from *Judæa,* where “ they had lain ſo many ages, into *Thrace:* then all the Bi- “ ſhops likewiſe were not onely ſacrilegious, but ſtupid too, “ who ſubmitted to carry a thing, the moſt contemptible, and “ nothing but mere duſt, in ſilk and veſſels of gold: and “ laſtly, then the people of all the Churches muſt needs be fools, “ who went out to meet thoſe holy reliques, and received them, “ with as much joy, as if they had ſeen the Prophet himſelf, “ living, and preſent among them: for the proceſſion was at- “ tended by ſwarms of people, from *Palæſtine,* even unto “ *Chalcedon,* ſinging with one voice the praiſes of Chriſt, “ who were yet adoring *Samuel* perhaps, and not Chriſt, whoſe “ Prophet and Levite *Samuel* was [*h*].”

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[g] See Dr. Chapman's defence of Jerom—in Miſcellan. Tracts. pag. 30, &c.

[*h*] Ergo—Sacrilegus fuit Conſtantius Imperator, &c. ibid. p. 282, 3.

Now let the Archdeacon declare once more, what it is, that we muſt ſay and think, *of theſe tranſlations and proceſſions of holy reliques,* which were ſolemnized, as *Jerom* here deſcribes them, with ſuch pomp and pageantry of devotion, by the Emperors, Biſhops, people, and all Chriſtian Churches of thoſe Primitive times. Muſt we with *Vigilantius,* call them acts of impiety, ſuperſtition and ſtupidity; or with *Jerom,* treat ſuch an opinion as blaſphemous and heretical? but whatever anſwer he may give, we may venture to affirm, without waiting for it, what is ſufficient for my purpoſe, and notorious to all, who have heard or ſeen, what paſſes in the *Church of Rome,* that *Jerom*'s account of *thoſe primitive reliques and their tranſlations,* is the very form, and pattern, by which *the Romaniſts tranſlate, receive and venerate their holy reliques* at this day.

I have now ſaid enough, for the preſent occaſion, concerning the uſe of the Fathers, and particularly of *Jerom,* with regard to our controverſies with the Papiſts, yet cannot put an end to this Poſtſcript, without adding a word or two, on what the Archdeacon has farther intimated, with reſpect to the ſame *Jerom,* and another ſort of enemies *the Freethinkers;* who make him likewiſe, as he would perſuade us, the particular object of their ſpleen, and would be glad, as well as the Papiſts, to get rid of him at any rate. Now if this had been ſaid of the Freethinkers onely, in popiſh countries, there would have been ſome ſenſe in it; but as it is here applied, there is certainly none at all. For in the Romiſh Church, there are many without doubt, who from a freedom of thinking, ſuperior to that of the vulgar, muſt needs condemn the whole ſyſtem of their monkery, their worſhip of Saints and reliques, their holy water, holy oil, croſſes, maſſes, exorciſms, and all their other ſuperſtitions;

manifeſtly contrived, to ſerve purpoſes merely ſecular; to ſupport the power, and increaſe the wealth of the Clergy: and it is natural to imagine, that men, whoſe ſcepticiſm turned chiefly on thoſe rites and practices, might be particularly galled, by the writings of *Jerom*, or the other Fathers, by whoſe authority, they were all at firſt propagated, and are ſtill maintained, and forcibly impoſed upon them. But the caſe is widely different in Proteſtant countries; where we are neither teized with ſuch fopperies, nor tied down to the authority of the Fathers; and where the Freethinkers conſequently have no reaſon, to fancy themſelves ſpecially hurt by any of them; but on the contrary, many obvious reaſons, why they ſhould enjoy and rejoice in them all; as affording infinite matter for the ſport of ſceptical wits; in the credulity, the ſuperſtition, the pious frauds, and forged miracles of thoſe primitive times: all which, they have never failed to ſet forth, as the genuin characters of the Chriſtian Prieſthood, and Chriſtian Churches of all ages; and to play them off with all their art, ſo as to make them bear againſt religion itſelf; and they bear indeed in the ſtrongeſt manner againſt the religion of *Rome*, as being wholly founded, and ſtill ſupported by thoſe very arts. But the Proteſtants ſtand clear, and unconcerned in the diſpute; and have nothing to do, but to look on, and divert themſelves with the iſſue of it. For their religion reſts on quite another foot, on the ſingle, but ſolid foundation of the ſacred Scriptures; unmixed with rubbiſh of antient tradition, or antient Fathers; and independent on the characters and writings of any men whatſoever, except of Moſes and the Prophets; Chriſt and the Apoſtles. But when Proteſtant Divines, urged on by an unhappy zeal, or the vanity of diſplaying their ſuperior learning, think fit, to take up the quarrel, as their own; and when *Arch-*

Archdeacons eſpecially, and *Lambeth Chaplains*, come forth, with a ſort of oracular authority, to defend thoſe primitive frauds and forgeries, and declare the cauſe of the Fathers, to be the common cauſe of all Chriſtians; then the affair indeed becomes ſerious; for this adds a real force and ſting to the railleries of the Sceptics; turns their ſlight cavils, into grave objections, and points them directly againſt Proteſtantiſm itſelf.

THE

AN
INQUIRY
Into the MIRACULOUS POWERS, &c.

I NOW procede, acccording to my promiſe, to a more preciſe and accurate Diſcuſſion of the argument of the *Introductory Diſcourſe*, and to open all the particular proofs, which induced me finally to embrace it, with that freedom and impartiality, which becomes every ingenuous and diſintereſted inquirer after truth: and, that I may lay the whole quæſtion before the reader in the cleareſt light, I propoſe to obſerve the following method.

I. To draw out, in their proper order, all the principal teſtimonies, which relate to the miraculous gifts of the Church, as they are found in the writings of the Fathers from the earlieſt ages, after the days of the Apoſtles. Whence we ſhall ſee, at one view, the whole evidence, by which they have hitherto been ſupported.

II. To throw together all, which thoſe Fathers alſo have delivered, concerning the condition of the perſons who are ſaid to have been indued with thoſe gifts, and to have wrought the miracles, to which they appeal.

III. To illuſtrate the particular characters and opinions of the Fathers, who atteſt thoſe miracles; ſo as to enable us to determine with more exactneſs, what degree of credit may be due to their teſtimony.

IV. To review all the ſeveral kinds of miracles, which are pretended to have been wrought, and to obſerve, from the nature of each, how far the credibility of them may reaſonably be ſuſpected.

V. To refute ſome of the moſt plauſible objections, which have hitherto been made by my antagoniſts, or which the prejudices and prepoſſeſſions of many pious Chriſtians may be apt to ſuggeſt to the general turn of my argument.

I. In collecting all the facts and teſtimonies, which relate to the preſent argument, from the earlieſt antiquity, after the days of the Apoſtles, our firſt thoughts are carried of courſe to the *Apoſtolic* Fathers, that is, to thoſe, who had lived and converſed with the Apoſtles, and who, by their ſpecial appointment, were ordained to ſuccede them in the Government of the Church. For as there are ſeveral of this character, whoſe writings ſtill remain to us, *St. Barnabas*, *St. Clemens*, *St. Ignatius*, *St. Polycarp*, *St. Hermas*, ſo it is natural to expect, that, in theſe valued remains, the Hiſtory of the miraculous gifts, which are ſo much celebrated by the writers of the New Teſtament, ſhould be carried on ſtill in the ſame manner by theſe their immediate ſucceſſors, through the next generation. For if any ſuch gifts had been actually ſubſiſting in their days, it is highly probable, that men of their eminent zeal and piety, who had ſeen the wonderful effects of them, under the management

Apostolic Fathers

Barnabas
Clemens
Ignatius.
Polycarp.
Hermas.

ment of the Apoſtles, and muſt themſelves have poſſeſſed a large ſhare of them, would have made ſome appeal or reference to them, in their circular epiſtles to the Churches, as their predeceſſors had done, for the honor of the Goſpel, and the credit of their own miniſtry. But inſtead of this, it is remarkable, that there is not the leaſt claim or pretenſion, in all their ſeveral pieces, to any of thoſe extraordinary gifts, which are the ſubject of this inquiry; nor to any ſtanding power of working miracles, as reſiding ſtill among them, for the converſion of the Heathen world. The whole purpoſe of their writings is, to illuſtrate the excellence and purity of the Chriſtian Doctrine; and the whole power of their miniſtry ſeems to have lain, in the innocent and amiable character of their lives, and in the pious, charitable, and fervent ſtrain of their paſtoral exhortations.

They ſpeak indeed in general, of certain *ſpiritual Gifts,* as abounding among the Chriſtians of that age: yet theſe cannot reaſonably be interpreted to mean any thing more, than the *ordinary gifts and graces* of the Goſpel, *faith, hope and charity*; *the love of God and of man*; which they all recommend in the warmeſt terms, and appear to have poſſeſſed in the higheſt degree. *Archbiſhop Wake* however, who has tranſlated their works into *Engliſh*, ſays, that, *in all probability, they were indued with the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit, and that there are ſufficient indications of it in their writings* [1]: “ which he endeavours “ to confirm, not by any facts or expreſs teſtimonies, drawn “ from themſelves, but by inferences onely or conjectures, “ grounded on a ſuppoſed frequency of thoſe indowments in “ that age, and the communication of them, as he ſays, to “ much leſſer and worſer men; on the ſanctity of their lives, “ and the greatneſs of the ſtations, to which they were called

Wake

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[1] See Prelim. Diſc. c. x. §. 11, 12.

" by the Apoſtles; and on the accounts of them, tranſmitted " to us by their Succeſſors: from all which he concludes, that " they were not onely inſtructed by perſons inſpired, but were " themſelves alſo in ſome meaſure inſpired too, or indued " with the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghoſt [1]." But whatever gifts of this ſort they may be ſuppoſed to have poſſeſſed, it is certain at leaſt, as the ſame Tranſlator of their works takes occaſion to inculcate, that their indowments were *far inferior both in their kind and degree*, to thoſe of their Predeceſſors, the Apoſtles [2].

Dodwell.

But the learned *Mr. Dodwell*, a writer of a more ſanguin complexion, peremptorily declares, from the mere title or addreſs of *St. Ignatius*'s Epiſtle to the Church of *Smyrna*, that miracles ſubſiſted in great abundance in thoſe days; becauſe that Church is there ſtiled, *bleſſed with every good gift*, *and wanting in no good gift* [3]. Yet theſe words, as they are explaned by the context, manifeſtly ſignify nothing more, than the ordinary gifts of the Goſpel, *Faith and Charity:* for the whole paſſage runs thus: *To the Church of God the Father*, *and of the beloved Jeſus Chriſt*, *which God hath mercifully bleſſed with every good gift*, *being filled with Faith and Charity*, *ſo as to be wanting in no good gift* [4]. In another Epiſtle likewiſe of St. *Ignatius*, to the *Romans*, written on his journey towards *Rome*, whither he was going to ſuffer martyrdom, there are theſe words; " I am " willing to die for God, unleſs you hinder me. I beſeech " you, that you ſhew not an unſeaſonable good will towards " me: ſuffer me to be food for the wild beaſts, by whom I

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[1] See Prelim. Diſc. c. x. §. 18, 23.

[2] *Ib.* §. 11, 23.

[3] Diſſertat. in Iren. II. §. VII.

[4] Ἠλεημένη ἐν παντὶ χαρίσματι, πεπληροφορημένη ἐν πίστει ϗ ἀγάπη, ἀνυστερήτῳ οὔση παντὸς χαρίσματος. Epiſt. ad Smyrn.

" ſhall attain unto God: for I am the wheat of God, and " ſhall be ground by the teeth of the wild beaſts, that I may " be found the pure bread of Chriſt, &c. [1]." From which words, the ſame learned perſon again infers, *that the prayers of the primitive Chriſtians had the power to diſable the wild beaſts from aſſaulting the Martyrs, who were expoſed to them in the Amphitheatres* [2]. Yet the paſſage itſelf has not the leaſt reference to prayers, or to any thing miraculous, but to the ordinary endeavours and interceſſion of the Chriſtian brethren at *Rome*, who offered to uſe their intereſt to preſerve him from that cruel death, which he was then going to ſuffer: to which ſenſe it is expreſſly reſtrained, in the relation of his Martyrdom, written by thoſe who accompanied him in this very journey, and were preſent at his death, by whom we are told; " that the brethren, who came out to meet him on his approach to that " city, and were zealous for his ſafety, *undertook to appeaſe the* " *people*, ſo that when he came to be expoſed to the wild beaſts " in the Amphitheatre, *they ſhould not deſire his deſtruction:* but " the Saint over-ruled, *and commanded them to be quiet* [3]." " And to the ſame ſenſe alſo Dr. *Cave* has interpreted it, in his *Life of this Saint.* " The Chriſtians at *Rome*, ſays he, came " out to meet and entertain him——and when ſome of them " did but intimate, that poſſibly the people might be taken off " from deſiring his death; he expreſſed a pious indignation, " intreating them to caſt no rubs in his way, that might hinder " him, now he was haſtening to his crown [4]."

Cave

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[1] Παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς, μὴ εὔνοια ἄκαιρος γένησθε μοι. ἄφετέ μὲ ϑηρίων εἶναι βοράν. &c. Ad Rom. c. IV.

[2] Ex Epiſtola ad Romanos intelligimus, Martyribus nonnullis datum, ne poſſent in eos beſtiæ immiſſæ ſævire. Proinde illud a *Romanis* enixiſſimis precibus contendit, ne eorum orationibus id in ſua cauſa contingeret. Diſſ. Iren. 2. §. XXX.

[3] See Relat. of Martyrd. of S. *Ignat.* §. 9, 10, 12.

[4] See *Cave*'s Lives of the Saints, Vol. I. p. 105. §. 8.

And in truth, all the other expreſſions of theſe Fathers, which are commonly underſtood to ſignify the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, may be interpreted more rationally and more agreeably to the general turn of their writings to denote onely the ordinary graces of the Goſpel, faith and charity; which they conſtantly extoll, as ſuperior to all other perfections; as *things wonderfull and admirable*; and *the peculiar gifts of God:* [1] nay in ſome places, they ſeem even to diſclame all gifts of a more extraordinary kind. Thus *Polycarp*, in his Polycarp Epiſtle to the *Philippians*, ſays; "theſe things, my brethren, "I took not the liberty to write to you of myſelf, concerning righteouſneſs, but you before encouraged me to it. For "neither I, nor any other ſuch as I am, can come up to the "wiſdom of the bleſſed and renowned *Paul.* And in the "ſame Epiſtle he declares, that it was not granted to him, "to practiſe that, which is written in the Scripture; *be angry "and ſin not, and let not the ſun go down upon your wrath* [2]." St. *Ignatius* alſo, in his Epiſtle to the *Epheſians*, ſays; "theſe Ignatius "things I preſcribe to you, not as if I were ſome body extra"ordinary, for tho' I am bound for his name, I am not yet "perfect in *Jeſus Chriſt*, but now I begin to learn, and ſpeak "to you, as to fellow diſciples. For I ought to have been "ſtirred up by you in faith, in admonition, *&c.* [3]"

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[1] Clem. I. Epiſt. ad Corinth. c. 49, 50. it. Ignat. Ep. ad Epheſ. XIV.

Clemens. Thus when St. *Clemens* tells the *Corinthians*, that *they had all been bleſſed with a large effuſion of the Holy Spirit.* [§ 11.] yet this effuſion, as it appears from the context, was not of a kind which conferred any extraordinary powers, but onely pious affections and good inclinations. And in the ſame Epiſtle, where he is exhorting them to ſubmit themſelves, one to another, according to *the gift*, which had been beſtowed upon each: he means nothing more by *that gift*, or *chariſma*, as he calls it, than the different talents, abilities, and advantages, whether natural or acquired, of *ſtrength, wiſdom, riches, continence,* &c. by which Providence thinks fit to diſtinguiſh the different characters of men. § 38.

[2] Ep. ad Philipp. c. III. it. c. XII.

[3] Ad Epheſ. c. III.

This ſame Saint indeed, in one or two of his Epiſtles, ſeems to intimate, that the knowledge of certain events had been communicated to him by the Spirit. Thus, in his Epiſtle to the *Philadelphians*, ſpeaking of the earneſt exhortations, which he had given them, to unity and ſubmiſſion to their *Biſhops, Prieſts, and Deacons*, he ſays; " ſome people ſuſpect-" ed, that I was acquainted before hand with the diviſions " among you: but he is my witneſs, for whom I am bound, " that I did not know it from any human fleſh, but the ſpi-" rit declared it, ſpeaking thus, *do nothing without your Biſhop*, " &c." [1] from which Dr. *Wake* takes occaſion to infer *that he was indued with a large Portion of the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghoſt* [2]*:* yet I do not find, that any other Commentator has ventured to build any thing miraculous or ſupernatural upon it.

It is related likewiſe of *Polycarp*, in the antient narrative of his martyrdom, " how in the time of that perſecution, in " which his life was particularly ſought for by the Heathen " Magiſtrates, he withdrew himſelf from *Smyrna*, by the ad-" vice of his friends, into a little village, where he ſpent his " days and nights in prayer, with a few, who accompanied " him; and as he was praying, a viſion was offered to him, " three days before he was taken, in which he ſaw his pillow " on fire: whereupon, turning preſently to his companions, he " ſaid prophetically, I muſt certainly be burnt alive." The ſame narrative calls him alſo a *Prophetic teacher*; and declares, *that every word, which he uttered, had either been fullfilled, or would be fullfilled.* [3] Whence ſome later writers have affirmed, that he was indued with a ſpirit of prophecy, and foretold every thing, that was to happen to him. But the foreſight of his death, and the manner of it, in the time of a cruel perſecution, when his perſon was particularly hunted from village to village, as the principal and deſtined ſacrifice, may reaſonably be conſidered as the effect of common prudence, without recurring to any thing miraculous.

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[1] Ibid. c. VII.

[2] See Prelim. Treat. c. X. §. 13.

[3] Vid. Martyr. Polyc. c. V, XVI.

Here then we have an interval of about half a century, the earlieſt and pureſt of all Chriſtian Antiquity after the days of the Apoſtles, in which we find not the leaſt reference to any ſtanding power of working miracles, as exerted openly in the Church, for the conviction of unbelievers; but on the contrary, the ſtrongeſt reaſon to preſume, that the extraordinary gifts of the Apoſtolic age were by this time actually withdrawn; and the Goſpel left to make it's way by it's own ſtrength, and the authority of thoſe credentials, and original miracles, with which Chriſt had furniſhed it, as an effectual ſecurity of it's ſucceſs and triumphs over the powers of the earth. Yet before we take leave of theſe Apoſtolic Fathers, it may be proper to obſerve, for the prevention of unneceſſary cavils; that, if from the paſſages referred to above, or from any other, which may be found in them, it ſhould appear probable to any, that they were favored on ſome occaſions, with *extraordinary illuminations, viſions, or divine impreſſions,* I ſhall not diſpute that point with them, but remind them onely, that the gifts of that ſort were merely perſonal, granted for their particular comfort, and reaching no farther than to themſelves; and do not therefore in any manner affect or relate to the quæſtion now before us.

But if the Apoſtolic writers have left us in the dark, with regard to our preſent argument, their Succeſſors, it muſt be owned, as far as their authority reaches, have cleared it from all obſcurity, by their ſtrong, explicit, and repeated atteſtations of many extraordinary gifts and miraculous powers, which were conſtantly and publicly exerted in the Chriſtian Church, through each ſucceding age.

Juſtin Martyr, who is ſuppoſed to have written his firſt Apology within fifty years after the days of the Apoſtles, ſays, “There are prophetical gifts among us at this day, and both “men and women indued with extraordinary powers by “the Spirit of God [1].” And he frequently appeals, to “what every one might ſee with his own eyes, in every part “of the world, and particularly in *Rome*, in the caſe of per“ſons poſſeſſed with Devils; who were cured and ſet free, and “the Devils themſelves baffled and driven away by the Chri“ſtians, adjuring or exorciſing them in the name of *Jeſus*, when all other Exorciſts and Inchanters had tried in vain to help them [2].” *Justin.*

Irenæus, who was contemporary with *Juſtin*, but wrote ſomewhat later, and lived much longer, affirms; “that all, “who were truly diſciples of *Jeſus*, receiving grace from him, “wrought miracles in his name, for the good of mankind, “according to the gift, which each man had received: ſome “caſt out Devils, ſo that thoſe, from whom they were eject“ed, often turned believers, and continued in the Church: “others had the knowledge of future events, viſions, and “prophetical ſayings: others healed the ſick by the impoſition “of hands, that even the dead had been raiſed, and lived af“terwards many years among them: that it was impoſſible, *Irenæus.*

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[1] Παρὰ γὰρ ἡμῖν ϗ μέχρι νῦν ϖροφητικὰ χαρίσματά ἐστιν, &c. Καὶ ϖαρ' ἡμῖν ἐστὶν ἰδεῖν ϗ θηλείας ϗ ἄρσενας χαρίσματα ἀπὸ τοῦ ϖνεύματος τοῦ θεοῦ ἔχοντας. Dial. par. 2. p. 315, & 330. Edit. Thirlb.

[2] Apolog. 2. p. 116. vid. etiam p. 196, 303, 320, 21, &c.

" to reckon up all the mighty works, which the Church per-" formed every day, to the benefit of nations; neither deceiv-" ing, nor making a gain of any, but freely beſtowing, what " it had freely received [1]." And as to the particular mira-" cle of *raiſing the dead,* he declares it, " to have been fre-" quently performed on neceſſary occaſions; when by great " faſting, and the joint ſupplication of the Church of that " place, the ſpirit of the dead perſon returned into him, and " the man was given back to the prayers of the Saints [2]." And again, " we hear many, ſays he, in the Church indued " with prophetic gifts; ſpeaking with all kind of tongues; " laying open the ſecrets of men for the public good; and " expounding the myſteries of God [3]."

Theophilus.

Theophilus, Biſhop of *Antioch,* who lived in the ſame age with *Irenæus,* ſpeaking of the *evil and ſeducing Spirits,* which uſed to inſpire the Poets and Prophets of the Heathen world, ſays; " the truth of this is manifeſtly ſhewn; becauſe thoſe, " who are poſſeſſed by ſuch Spirits, are ſometimes exorciſed " even at this day by us, in the name of the true God; when " theſe ſeducing Spirits confeſs themſelves to be the ſame Dæ-" mons, who had before inſpired the Heathen Poets [4].

Tertullian

Tertullian, who floriſhed towards the end of the ſecond, and died in the beginning of the third century, challenges the Heathen Magiſtrates, " to call before their tribunals, any per-" ſon poſſeſſed with a *Devil*: and if the evil ſpirit, when ex-" orciſed by any Chriſtian whatſoever, did not own himſelf " to be a Devil, as truly, as in other places, he would falſely

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[1] Adverſ. Hæreſ. l. 2. c. LVII. p. 188. Edit. Oxon. it. Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccl. l. 5. c. 7.

[2] Adv. Hæreſ. l. 2. c. LVI. p. 186. it. Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccl. ibid.

[3] Ibid. l. 5. c. VI. p. 406.

[4] Ad. Autolyc. l. 21. p. 87. c. ad calcem Oper. Juſt. Mart. Par. 1636.

" call himſelf a God, not daring to tell a lie to a Chriſtian, " that then they ſhould take the life of that Chriſtian: and " what is more manifeſt, adds he, than this operation; what " more convincing than this proof [1]?" In another place, " there is a Siſter, ſays he, among us, indued with the gifts " of revelations, which ſhe ſuffers in the Church, during the " time of divine ſervice, by an ecſtaſy in the ſpirit: ſhe con- " verſes with Angels, and ſometimes alſo with the Lord: ſees " and hears myſteries: and knows the hearts of ſome, and pre- " ſcribes medicines to thoſe, who want them [2]."

Minucius.

Minucius Felix, who is ſuppoſed to have written in the beginning of the third century, addreſſing himſelf to his Heathen friend in his Dialogue, called *Octavius*, ſays; " the greateſt " part of you know, what confeſſions the Dæmons make " concerning themſelves, as oft as they are expelled by us " out of the bodies of men, by the torture of our words, " and the fire of our ſpeech. *Saturn* himſelf, and *Serapis* and " *Jupiter*, and the reſt of them, whom you worſhip, con- " ſtrained by the pain, which they feel, confeſs what they are: " nor in this, do they tell us a lie, tho' it be to their own " ſhame, eſpecially when ſome of your people are preſent. " Believe them therefore to be Dæmons, from their own teſti- " mony, and true confeſſion. For being adjured by the true " and onely God, they unwillingly and wretchedly betray " their uneaſineſs in the bodies of men; and either fly out " inſtantly, or vaniſh gradually, in proportion as the faith

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[1] Edatur hic aliquis ſub tribunalibus veſtris, quem Dæmone agi conſtet. Juſſus a quolibet Chriſtiano loqui ſpiritus ille, tam ſe Dæmonem confitebitur de vero, quam Deum alibi de falſo—quid iſto opere manifeſtius? quid hac probatione fidelius? Apolog. c. 23.

[2] De Anima. § 9.

" of the patient, or the grace of the agent aſſiſts towards the " cure [1].

Origen.

Origen, who lived at the ſame time with *Minucius,* tho' ſomething younger, declares; " that there remained ſtill among the " Chriſtians of his days, the manifeſt indications of that Holy " Spirit, which was ſeen in the ſhape of a Dove. For they " drive away Devils, ſays he; perform many cures; foreſee " things to come; according to the will of the divine Word: " and tho' *Celſus* and the *Jew,* who is introduced by him, will " make a jeſt, of what I am going to ſay, I will ſay it never-" theleſs; that many people, as it were againſt their wills, " have been brought over to Chriſtianity, by the Spirit giving " a ſudden turn to their minds, and offering viſions to them " either by day or by night; ſo that inſtead of hating the " word, they became ready even to lay down their lives for it. " I have ſeen many examples of this ſort; and ſhould I onely " ſet down ſuch of them, as were tranſacted in my preſence, I " ſhould expoſe myſelf to the loud laughter of the unbelievers, " who imagine that we, like the reſt, whom they ſuſpect of " forging ſuch things, are impoſing our forgeries alſo upon " them: but God is my witneſs, that my ſole purpoſe is, to re-" commend the religion of *Jeſus,* not by fictitious tales, but " by clear and evident facts [2]."

In another place, he ſays; " that miracles began with " the preaching of *Jeſus,* were multiplied after his aſcen-" ſion, and then again decreaſed; but that, even in his " days, ſome remains of them continued with a few, whoſe " ſouls were cleanſed by the word, and a Life conformable to

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[1] Minuc. Octav. p. 23. ad Calcem Edit. Cyprian. per Rigalt. Pariſ.

[2] Cont. Celſ. l. 1. p. 34, 35. Edit. Cant.

" it [1]." Again; ſome, ſays he, in proof of a miraculous " power received through faith in Chriſt, heal the ſick, by invoking the name of God over them, and of *Jeſus*, with a recital of ſome ſtory of his life. I myſelf have ſeen many ſo " healed in difficult caſes; loſs of ſenſes, madneſs, and innumerable other evils, which neither men nor Devils could " cure [2]." Again; ſpeaking of Devils, We are ſo far, ſays " he, from worſhipping them, that by prayers and the rehearſal of ſome paſſages of the ſacred writ, we drive them " before us; out of men and places, and alſo out of beaſts; " for they ſometimes attempt to do miſchief alſo to theſe [3]." Then as to the method of performing this miracle, " it was " not, he ſays, by any curious, magical, or inchanting arts, " but by prayer alone, and certain plain adjurations or exorciſms, which any ſimple Chriſtian might perform: for even " common and illiterate laymen were generally the actors in " this caſe [4]." In which no man was more eminent, than one of his own diſciples, *Gregory*, called the *Wonder-worker*, who caſt out Devils, not onely by word of mouth, but even by *a meſſage, or mandatory letter to them*; as the Eccleſiaſtical writers have recorded of him [5].

Gregory.

Cyprian, the ſcholar of *Tertullian*, who wrote about the middle of the third century, ſpeaking of *prophetic viſions*, which was the peculiar gift of that age, ſays; " beſides the viſions of the " night, even boys among us are filled with the Holy Ghoſt,

Cyprian.

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[1] Σημεῖα δὲ τȣ̃ ἁγίȣ ϖνεύματος καὶ ἀρχὰς μὲν τῆς Ιησȣ̃ διδασκαλίας, μετὰ δὲ τὴν ἀνάληψιν αὐτȣ̃ ϖλείονα ἐδείκνυτο, ὕϛερον δὲ ἐλάττονα. ϖλὴν ϗ νῦν ἔτι ἐϛὶν ἴχνη αὐτȣ̃ ϖαρ᾽ ὀλίγοις. &c. ib. l. 7. p. 337. it. l. 2. 62.

[2] Ibid. l. 3. p. 124.

[3] Ἐθ᾽ ὅτε δὲ ϗ ἀπὸ τῶν ζώων. ϖολλάκις γὰρ ἐπὶ τῇ λύμῃ ϗ τῶν τοιȣ́των ἐνεργȣ̃σι τινα οἱ δαίμονες. Ibid. l. 7. p. 376.

[4] Ὡς ἐπίπαν γὰρ ἰδιῶται τὸ τοιȣ̃τον πράττȣσι. Ibid. p. 334.

[5] Κακεῖ πρῶτον μὲν λαικὸς ὢν, ϖολλὰ σημεῖα ἐποίησε, νοσȣ̃ντας θεραπεύων, ϗ δαίμονας δι᾽ ἐπιϛολῶν φυγαδεύων. Socrat. Hiſt. l. 4. 27.

" and in fits of ecſtacy, ſee, hear, and ſpeak things, by which " the Lord thinks fit to inſtruct us [1]." And deſcribing all the various pranks of the Devils, " they inſinuate themſelves, " ſays he, into the bodies of men, raiſe terrors in the mind, " diſtortions in the limbs, break the conſtitution, and bring " on diſeaſes——yet adjured by us in the name of the true God, " they preſently yield, confeſs, and are forced to quit the bodies, which they poſſeſſed. You may ſee them by our command, and the ſecret operation of the divine power, laſhed " with ſcourges, ſcorched with fire, tortured by an increaſe " of pains; howling, groaning, begging; confeſſing whence " they came, and whither they go, even in the hearing of " their own worſhippers: and they either fly out immediately, " or vaniſh gradually, according to the faith of the patient, " or the grace of him, who works the cure [2]." In another place, treating again on the ſame miracle, " it is performed, " ſays he, at this day, ſo that the Devil is laſhed and burned " and tortured by the Exorciſts, with human words, but a " divine power: and when he promiſes to go out, and to diſmiſs the men of God, he often deceives, and by the ſame lie " of obſtinacy and fraud, does what *Pharaoh* had done before, " till he is oppreſſed by the ſalutary water of Baptiſm [3]."

Arnobius,

Arnobius, who is ſuppoſed to have publiſhed his book againſt the Gentiles, in the year of Chriſt 303, tells us, "that Chriſt uſed to appear ſometimes in thoſe days, to juſt "and holy men, not in vain dreams, but in his pure and "ſimple form: and that the mention of his name put the "evil ſpirits to flight; ſtruck their prophets dumb; deprived "the Southſayers of the power of anſwering; and fruſtrated "the acts of arrogant Magicians; not by the terror or hatred "of his name, as the Heathens pretended, but by the efficacy "of his ſuperior power [1]."

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[1] Præter nocturnas enim viſiones, per dies quoque impletur apud nos Spiritu ſancto puerorum innocens ætas, quæ in exſtaſi videt oculis, & audit & loquitur ea, quibus nos Dominus monere & inſtruere dignatur. Epiſt. ix. Edit. Rigalt. Par.

[2] Ibid. De Idolor. vanit. p. 206.

[3] Ibid. Epiſt. 76. p. 154. The example of *Pharaoh* here alluded to, is explaned by him in the following manner: King *Pharaoh* having ſtruggled and perſiſted in his perfidy, was able to carry on his reſiſtance ſo far, till he came to the water, where he was ſubdued and deſtroyed. For that Sea, as St. *Paul* ſays, was the Sacrament of Baptiſm.—And ſo he ſhews how the Devils uſed to act the ſame part, when adjured by the Chriſtian Exorciſts, and continued to afflict the people of God till they came to the water of Baptiſm.

Lactantius, the diſciple of *Arnobius*, who floriſhed and wrote about the ſame time, ſpeaking of thoſe Dæmons or evil ſpirits, ſays; "that being adjured by the Chriſtians in the name of "God, they retire out of the bodies of men; and being laſhed "by their words, as by ſcourges, confeſs themſelves to be "Dæmons; and even tell their names; the ſame, which are "adored in the Temples; and this even in the preſence of their "worſhippers; yet caſting no reproach on religion, but on "their own honor, becauſe it is not in their power to lie "either to God, in whoſe name they are adjured, or to the "juſt, by whoſe voice they are tortured: wherefore after many "howlings, they frequently cry out, that they are ſcourged "and burned, and are going out inſtantly [2]." Lactantius.

Theſe are the principal teſtimonies, which aſſert the miraculous gifts of the Primitive Church, through the three firſt centuries: which might be ſupported ſtill by many more of the ſame kind, and from the ſame, as well as different writers, if it were neceſſary [1]. But theſe are ſufficient for our purpoſe: and the warmeſt admirers of thoſe ages, will not ſcruple, I dare ſay, to riſk the fate of the cauſe upon the merit of them: for if theſe cannot command belief, the credit of the miracles in quæſtion muſt ſink at once; ſince Chriſtian antiquity can furniſh no other evidence in their favor, half ſo ſtrong and authentic as this.

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[1] Qui juſtiſſimis viris etiam nunc impollutis, ac diligentibus ſeſe, non per vana inſomnia, ſed per puræ ſpeciem ſimplicitatis apparet. Cujus nomen auditum fugat noxios ſpiritus. Imponit ſilentium vatibus. Haruſpices inconſultos reddit. Arrogantium Magorum fruſtrari efficit actiones, non horrore, ut dicitur, nominis, ſed majoris licentia poteſtatis. lib. 1. p. 13. ad Calcem Oper. Cyprian. Edit. per Rigalt.

[2] Divin. Inſtitut. lib. 2. c. 16.

I ſhall cloſe this firſt article with a remark or two, which it ſeems naturally to ſuggeſt. It has already been obſerved, that the ſilence of all the Apoſtolic writers, on the ſubject of theſe gifts, muſt diſpoſe us to conclude, that in thoſe days they were actually withdrawn. And if this concluſion be thought to have any weight in it, then ſurely the pretended revival of them, after a ceſſation of forty or fifty years, and the confident atteſtation of them made by all the ſucceding Fathers, cannot fail of infuſing a ſuſpicion of ſome fiction in the caſe. For if they did really ceaſe for ſo long an interval, and at a time, when the Chriſtian cauſe ſeemed to want them the moſt, as being then deprived of it's firſt and ableſt champions, the Apoſtles, we cannot conceive any reaſon, why they ſhould afterwards be revived, when the Church, without any ſuch help, had been gathering more and more ſtrength all that while, by its own natural force. But it is remarkable, that as the Church continued to increaſe in power and credit, ſo it's miraculous gifts are ſaid to have increaſed alſo in the ſame proportion: for tho' by an increaſe of power it certainly ſtood leſs in need of true miracles, yet by the ſame power it became more able to reward, and more likely therefore to excite falſe pretenſions to them.

Whiston.

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[1] See Mr. *Whiſton*'s Account of the Dæmoniacs, *&c.* in which he has collected many more teſtimonies relating to them, to ſhew, that the gift of curing them continued to the middle of the fourth century.

Again, the difference which every one may perceive, between the miraculous gifts of the Apoſtolic days, and theſe of the following ages, not onely in the nature, but in the manner alſo of exerting them, will greatly confirm the ſuſpicion juſt intimated. The Apoſtles wrought their miracles on ſpecial occaſions, when they felt themſelves prompted to it by a divine impulſe; but at other times, were deſtitute of that power; as it is evident from many facts and inſtances, recorded in the New Teſtament. Agreeably to which, tho' they appeal ſometimes, in confirmation of their miſſion, to the miraculous works, which their Maſter had inabled them to perform, yet we never find them calling out upon the Magiſtrates and people, to come and ſee the mighty wonders, which they were ready to exhibit before their eyes, on all occaſions, at any warning, and in all places, whenever they thought fit. Whereas this confident and oſtentatious manner of proclaming their extraordinary powers, carries with it an air of quackery and impoſture, as it was practiſed by the primitive wonder-workers; who, in the affair eſpecially of caſting out Devils, challenge all the world to come and ſee, with what a ſuperiority of power they could chaſtiſe and drive thoſe evil ſpirits out of the bodies of men, when no other *Conjurers*, *Inchanters*, or *Exorciſts*, either among the Jews or the Gentiles, had been able to eject them.

II. Under this head, I ſhall briefly lay before the reader, all ſuch notices, as I have been able to draw, from any of the Primitive writers, concerning the perſons, who were indued with theſe extraordinary gifts, and wrought the ſeveral miracles, to which they appeal.

Now whenever we think, or ſpeak with reverence, of thoſe primitive times, it is with regard always to theſe very Fathers, whoſe teſtimonies I have been collecting; who have left behind them, in their writings, the genuin ſpecimens of their ſanctity and abilities. *Venerable Saints, and eminent lights of the beſt and pureſt ages*, as *Dr. Waterland* calls them, *and of admirable indowments, ordinary and extraordinary* [1]. And they were indeed the chief perſons and champions of the Chriſtian cauſe in thoſe days; the Paſtors, Biſhops, and Martyrs of the Primitive Church. Yet none of theſe *Venerable Saints* have any where affirmed, that either they themſelves, or the Apoſtolic Fathers before them, were indued with any power of working miracles, but declare onely in general, " that ſuch powers were actually " ſubſiſting in their days, and openly exerted in the Church; " that they had often ſeen the wonderful effects of them; and " that every body elſe might ſee the ſame, whenever they pleaſed:" but as to the perſons, who wrought them, they leave us ſtrangely in the dark; for inſtead of ſpecifying their names, conditions, or characters, their general ſtile is, " ſuch and ſuch works " are done among us, or by us; by our people; by a few; by many; by our Exorciſts; by ignorant laymen, women, boys, and " any ſimple Chriſtian whatſoever:" but in the particular caſe of *caſting out Devils*, *Origen* expreſſly ſays, *that it was performed generally by laymen* [2]. Agreeably to which Mr. *Whiſton* declares, " that this gift, which he ranks amongſt the greateſt of miracles, was wholly appropriated by our Saviour, to the " meaner ſort of Chriſtians, with an excluſion even of the

Waterland

Whiston.

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[1] Import. of the Doctr. of the Trin. p. 143, 160, 169.

[2] ὡς ἐπίπαν γὰρ ἰδιῶται τὸ τοιοῦτον πράττουσι. Con. Celſ. 7. 334.

" Clergy, ſo that, after the days of the Apoſtles, none of " the ſacred order ever pretended to it [1].

But of what condition ſoever the actors were, it is certain, that in the performance of their miracles, they were always charged with fraud and impoſture by their adverſaries. *Lucian* Lucian tells us, *that whenever any crafty Juggler, expert in his trade, and who knew how to make a right uſe of things, went over to the Chriſtians, he was ſure to grow rich immediately, by making a prey of their ſimplicity* [2]. And *Celſus* Celsus. repreſents all the Chriſtian wonder-workers, as mere vagabonds and common cheats, " who rambled about to play their tricks at fairs and markets; " not in the circles of the wiſer and better ſort, for among ſuch " they never ventured to appear; but wherever they obſerved " a ſet of raw young fellows, ſlaves or fools; there they took " care to intrude themſelves and to diſplay all their arts [3]." *Cæcilius* alſo calls them, *a lurking nation*; *ſhunning the light*; *mute in public*; *prating in corners* [4].

The ſame charge was conſtantly urged againſt them by all the other enemies of the Chriſtian Faith, *Julian, Porphyry,* Julian. Porphyry. &c. of whom Dr. *Waterland* however has taken occaſion to declare, *that they had ſome regard to truth, in what they ſaid, and to public report, and to their own characters* [5]. But as this ſeems to have been an haſty and inconſiderate conceſſion, made to ſerve a particular point, which he was then urging, that *the antient Infidels were better men than the moderns*, ſo I ſhall lay no ſtreſs upon it, but obſerve onely on the whole, that from theſe ſhort hints and characters of the primitive wonder-workers, as given both by friends and enemies, we may fairly conclude; that the celebrated gifts of thoſe ages were generally engroſſed and exerciſed by private Chriſtians, chiefly of the layety; who uſed to travel about from City to City, to aſſiſt the ordinary Paſtors of the Church, and Preachers of the Goſpel, in the converſion of the Pagans, by the extraordinary gifts with which they were ſuppoſed to be indued by the Spirit of God, and the miraculous works, which they pretended to perform.

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[1] See his Account of the Dæmoniacs, p. 52, 53, 57.

[2] Ην τοίνυν παρέλθη τίς εἰς αὐτοὺς γόης, καὶ τεχνίτης ἄνθρωπος, καὶ πράγμασι χρῆσθαι δυνάμενος, αὐτίκα μάλα πλούσιος ἐν βραχεῖ ἐγένετο, ἰδιώταις ἀνθρώποις ἐγχανών. De Mort. Pereg. T. 2. p. 568. Ed. Var.

[3] Ὁ δὲ γόητας ἡμᾶς καλεῖ, καί φησιν ὅτι φεύγομεν τοὺς χαριεστέρους προτροπάδην, ὡς οὐκ ἑτοίμους ἀπατᾶσθαι, παλεύομεν δὲ τοὺς ἀγροικοτέρους. &c. Orig. con. Celſ. l. 6. p. 284. vid. it. l. 3. p. 141.

[4] Latebroſa & lucifuga natio; in publicum muta; in angulis garrula, &c. Minuc. Fel. p. 7.

[5] " I know not whether *Celſus, Porphyry*, or *Julian*, would have ſaid ſuch " a thing, in the greateſt extremity of " their rage. They had ſome regard to " truth and to public report, and to their " own characters." Import. of the Doctr. of the Trin. p. 426.

And here again, we ſee a diſpenſation of things aſcribed to God, quite different from that, which we meet with in the New Teſtament. For in thoſe days, the power of working miracles was committed to none but the Apoſtles, and to a few of the moſt eminent of the other diſciples, who were particularly commiſſioned to propagate the Goſpel, and preſide in the Church of Chriſt: but upon the pretended revival of the ſame powers in the following ages, we find the adminiſtration of them committed, not to thoſe, who were inſtructed with the government of the Church; not to the ſucceſſors of the Apoſtles, to the Biſhops, the Martyrs, or the principal Champions of the Chriſtian cauſe; but *to boys*, *to women*, and above all, *to private and obſcure laymen*, not onely of an inferior, but ſometimes alſo of *a bad character* [1]. But if thoſe venerable Saints and Martyrs were not indued with them when living, they had amends made to them when dead, if we can believe the reports of their ſucceſſors, by a profuſion of them on their bones and reliques: which ſuggeſts a farther cauſe of ſuſpecting the faith and judgement of thoſe early ages. For how can we think it credible, that God ſhould withhold his diſtinguiſhing favors, from his faithful ſervants when living, to beſtow them on their rotten bones? or employ his extraordinary power, to no other uſe, but to perpetuate a manifeſt impoſture in his Church? ſince it is to thoſe ancient tales, ſo gravely atteſted, of miracles wrought *by the bones of Saints and Martyrs,* that the Church of *Rome* owes all that trade, which ſhe ſtill draws, from the ſame fund and treaſure of her wonder-working reliques: and if we can believe ſuch ſtories, as they are delivered to us by the Primitive writers, we cannot condemn a practice, which is evidently grounded upon them.

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[1] Νυνὶ δὲ ϗ δι' ἀναξίων ἐνεργεῖν ὁ θεὸς εἴωθε. Chryſoſt. T. 3. p. 66. c. Edit. Benedict. Adjicient præterea multa de auctoritate cujuſque

Relics.

Theſe things, I ſay, are ſo ſtrange, as to give juſt reaſon to ſuſpect, that there was ſome original fraud in the caſe; and that thoſe ſtrolling wonder-workers, by a dexterity of juggling, which art, not Heaven had taught them, impoſed upon the credulity of the pious Fathers, whoſe ſtrong prejudices and ardent zeal for the intereſt of Chriſtianity, would diſpoſe them to embrace, without examination, whatever ſeemed to promote ſo good a cauſe. That this was really the caſe in ſome inſtances, is certain and notorious: and that it was ſo in all, will

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cujuſque Doctoris Hæretici; illos maxime doctrinæ ſuæ fidem confirmaſſe, mortuos ſuſcitaſſe, debiles reformaſſe, futura ſignificaſſe, ut merito Apoſtoli crederentur. Tertull. De præſcript. Hæreticor. §. 44.

Εκεῖνο δὲ προστίθεμεν τῷ λόγῳ, ὅτι οὔτε πᾶς ὁ προφητεύων, ὅσιος. οὔτε πᾶς ὁ δαίμονας ἐλαύνων. Conſtitut. Apoſtol. l. 8. c. 2.

Ut intelligamus, quædam miracula etiam ſceleratos homines facere, qualia ſancti facere non poſſunt. Auguſt. Oper. T. 6. p. 71.

appear ſtill more probable, when we have conſidered, in the next place, the particular characters of the ſeveral Fathers, on whoſe teſtimony, the credit of thoſe wonderfull narratives depends.

III. The authority of a writer, who affirms any quæſtionable fact, muſt depend on the character of his veracity and of his judgement. As far as we are aſſured of the one, ſo far are we aſſured, that he does not willingly deceive us; and from our good opinion of the other, we perſuade ourſelves, that he was not deceived himſelf: but in proportion as there is reaſon to doubt of either; there will always be reaſon to doubt, of the truth of what he delivers. Nay, in many caſes, the want of judgement alone, has all the ſame effect, as the want of veracity too, towards invalidating the teſtimony of a witneſs: eſpecially in caſes of an extraordinary, or miraculous nature; where the weakneſs of men is the moſt liable to be impoſed upon; and the more ſo, as it happens to be joined to the greater piety and ſimplicity of manners. Since this then is the ſole rule of determining the meaſure of credit, which is due to a witneſs of any ſtrange and quæſtionable facts, I ſhall apply it to the caſe before us; and examine what proofs of a ſound judgement and ſtrict veracity are to be found in the writings of thoſe Fathers, who atteſt the miraculous ſtories, which we are now conſidering.

As to the Apoſtolic Fathers, of whom I have ſpoken above, ſince they have contributed but little towards the illuſtration of the preſent quæſtion, and bear no direct teſtimony in it; or none at leaſt, but what confirms the point, which I am defending; there is no reaſon to enter into the conſideration of their particular characters. Their works, as I have ſaid, are tranſlated into *Engliſh*, ſo that every one may judge of them for himſelf. They appear to have been men of great piety, integrity, and ſimplicity: and that is all, I think, which we need to declare of them on this occaſion.

Justins Expositions.

Juſtin Martyr comes next, whoſe genius will beſt be illuſtrated by ſome ſpecimens of it, extracted from his writings. We have ſeen above, that among the indowments conferred in an extraordinary manner on the Primitive Chriſtians, *the gift of expounding the holy Scriptures*, or the *myſteries of God*, was reckoned one: and this, as *Juſtin* frequently affirms, *was granted by the ſpecial grace of God to himſelf* [1]. Let us inquire then, what uſe he made of this divine gift: and if ever he was really inlightened by it, we might ſurely expect to find the effects of it there, where he is diſcourſing *on the myſtery of the Croſs*; which he declares to be the greateſt ſymbol of power and dominion, and explanes in the following manner. “ Conſider, ſays he, all the “ things in the world, whether they could be adminiſtered, “ or have any communication with each other, without this “ form of the Croſs. The Sea could not be paſſed, unleſs that “ trophy called the ſail, were preſerved in the ſhip: the earth “ could not be tilled without it: for neither diggers nor arti- “ ficers could do their work, but by inſtruments of this ſhape. “ The form of man differs in nothing elſe from other animals, “ but in the erection of his body, and the extenſion of his arms, “ and the projection of his noſe from the forehead, through “ which reſpiration is made, and which ſhews nothing elſe but “ the figure of the croſs: in which ſenſe alſo it is ſpoken of by “ the Prophet; *Chriſt the Lord is the breath before our face* [2].”

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[1] Ἀπεκάλυψεν οὖν ἡμῖν πάντα ὅσα καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν γραφῶν διὰ τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ νενοήκαμεν. Dial. par. 2. p. 352.

Οὐδὲ γὰρ δύναμις ἐμοὶ τοιαύτη τὶς ἐστὶν, ἀλλὰ χάρις παρὰ Θεοῦ μόνη εἰς τὸ συνιέναι τὰς γραφὰς αὐτοῦ ἐδόθη μοι. Ib. p. 258.

[2] Κατανοήσατε γὰρ πάντα τὰ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, εἰ ἄνευ τοῦ σχήματος τούτου διοικεῖσθαι, ἢ κοινωνίαν ἔχειν δύναται, &c. Apol. 1. p. 82.

Upon this paſſage the very pious and learned Dr. *Grabe* makes the following remarks, which I would recommend to all the zealous admirers of theſe *venerable Saints* and *pureſt ages*; " *that* " *the holy Martyr muſt not be raſhly blamed, for an interpretation* " *ſo forced and far fetched*; *becauſe it was the prevailing cuſtom* " *of that age, to import into the ſacred text ſenſes, which did not* " *belong to it* [1]."

Again; " Hear, ſays *Juſtin*, how Chriſt, after he was cruci- " fied, fulfilled the ſymbol of the tree of life in Paradiſe, and " of all the other things, which were to happen afterwards to " the righteous. For *Moſes* was ſent with a rod, to redeem " his people: with this rod he divided the ſea; brought water " out of the rock; and with a piece of wood, made the bitter " water ſweet. *Jacob* alſo with ſticks, made his uncle *La-* " *ban*'s ſheep bring forth ſuch lambs, as were to be his own " again, *&c.* [2]." And ſo he goes on, in this way of alluſion, to apply all the ſticks and pieces of wood in the Old Teſtament to the Croſs of Chriſt: and purſuing the ſame argument in another place, where he is deſcribing the fight of the *Iſraelites* with *Amalek*, he ſays, " that when the ſon of *Nun*, " called *Jeſus*, led the people on to battel, *Moſes* employed him- " ſelf in prayer, with his hands ſtretched out in the form of " a Croſs; that, as long as he continued in that poſture, " *Amalek* was beaten; but when he remitted any thing of it, " his own people ſuffered: and that all this was owing to the " power of the croſs: for the people did not conquer, becauſe

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[1] Alium autem ſenſum tradit hoc loco *Juſtinus*, qui nimis longe quidem petitus videtur: nec tamen S. Martyr idcirco temere reprehendendus, quod mos iſtius ævi tam inter Judæos, quam Chriſtianos obtinuerit, ſacro textui haud innatos ſenſus ſub inferre. Vid. not. (29) ad Juſtin. ibid.

[2] Ὅτι δὲ, μετὰ τὸ σταυρωθῆναι τοῦτον ——σύμβολον εἶχε τοῦ ξύλου τῆς ζωῆς, ὃ ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ πεφυτεῦσθαι ἐλέλεκτο, καὶ τῶν γενησομένων πᾶσι τοῖς δικαίοις, ἀκούσατε, &c. Id. Dial. p. 2. p. 325, 326.

" *Moſes* prayed; but becauſe, while the name of *Jeſus* was at " the head of the battel, *Moſes* was exhibiting the figure of the " Croſs [1]." It would be endleſs to run through all the interpretations of the ſame kind, which are to be found in this Father; ſince his works are but little elſe, than a wretched collection of them: the pure flights of an enthuſiaſtic fancy and heated brain, which no man in his ſober ſenſes could miſtake for divine revelations. Yet as abſurd as they now appear to be, this pious Father inſiſts, that they were all ſuggeſted to him from Heaven; and appeals to the *Jews* themſelves againſt whom he was applying them, *whether they thought it poſſible for him, to acquire ſo perfect a knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, if he had not received from the author of them, the grace or gift, to underſtand them* [2]. What credit then can be due to this Father, in the report of other people's gifts and inſpirations, who was ſo groſſly deceived himſelf, or willing at leaſt to deceive others, in this confident atteſtation of his own? Dr. *Cave* tells us, that *Juſtin was wholly ignorant of the Hebrew tongue*; which was the cauſe of his childiſh blunders, whenever he meddled with it. " Every one, ſays he, who has dipped but ever ſo little into " that tongue, knows, that *Satan* in the *Hebrew* ſignifies an " adverſary: but ſee the ridiculous interpretation of *Juſtin:* " He is called *Satanas,* ſays the Martyr; a name compounded " agreeably to his nature, of *Sata,* which ſignifies an Apoſtate, " and *Nas,* a Serpent, *&c.* [3]." But for a farther illuſtration of his character, I ſhall give an inſtance or two of the doctrines, which he teaches, as orthodox and Apoſtolical, as well as of the facts, which he aſſerts, as certain and unquæſtionable.

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[1] Οὐ γὰρ ὅτι, οὕτως ἠύχετο Μωσῆς, διὰ τοῦτο κρείσσων ὁ λαὸς ἐγίνετο, ἀλλ᾽ ὅτι—— αὐτὸς τὸ σημεῖον τοῦ σταυροῦ ἐποίει. Ibid. p. 336.

[2] Οἴεσθε ἂν ἡμᾶς ποτὲ, ὦ ἄνδρες, νενοηκέναι δυνηθῆναι ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς ταῦτα, εἰ μὴ θελήματι τοῦ θελήσαντος αὐτὰ ἐλάβομεν χάριν τοῦ νοῆσαι. Dial. par. 2. p. 390.

[3] Litterarum Hebraicarum rudem penitus & imperitum fuiſſe, *Juſtino* vitio verti non debet, *&c.*——Hinc factum eſt, ut in Hebræis adeo pueriliter lapſus ſit exemplum dabo, *&c.* Cave Hiſt. Litter. p. 61. Edit. ult.

Justins Doctrina Millennium.

He declares, that all the Chriſtians, who were in all points orthodox, embraced and believed the doctrine of the *millennium:* "that all the Saints ſhould be raiſed in the fleſh, and reign "with *Chriſt* in *Jeruſalem*, enlarged and beautified in a won-"derful manner for their reception, in the enjoyment of all "ſenſual pleaſures, for a thouſand years before the general "reſurrection [1]." Which doctrine he deduces from the teſtimony of the Prophets and of St. *John* the Apoſtle; and was followed in it by the Fathers of the ſecond and third centuries: yet the doctrine itſelf was afterwards exploded, as it well deſerved, not onely as abſurd and monſtrous, but as impious and heretical. St. *Jerom* treats it as a mere fable, or *dream of the* Jews, *and Judaizing Chriſtians.* Yet from the authority of thoſe Fathers, who aſſerted it, and the credit, which it had obtained with the generality of Chriſtians, he foreſaw, as he tells us, *what a furious ſtorm he ſhould raiſe againſt himſelf by that freedom* [2]. The ſure fate of all thoſe, who, in any age of the Church, from the earlieſt times down to the preſent, have had the virtue and courage to attack any popular error, or reigning ſuperſtition.

Dæmons.

He aſſerts another doctrine full as monſtrous; "that God

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[1] Εγὼ δὲ ϗ εἴ τινές εἰσιν ὀρθογνώμονες κατὰ πάντα χριστιανοὶ, ϗ σαρκὸς ἀνάστασιν γενήσεσθαι ἐπιστάμεθα, ϗ χίλια ἔτη ἐν Ἰερȣσαλὴμ, οἰκοδομηθείσῃ, ϗ κοσμηθείσῃ, ϗ πλατυνθείσῃ, &c. Dialog. par. 2. p. 313.

[2] Quæ qui recipiunt, mille quoque annorum fabulam & terrenum Salvatoris imperium Judaico errore ſuſcipient—— Comment. in Iſa. c. 30. Oper. Tom. 3. p. 262. Edit Benedict.

Ex quo diſcimus mille annorum fabulam, in qua rurſum nuptiæ promittuntur, & cibi & terrenæ vitæ converſatio, abjiciendam. Ib. p. 436.

Ut præſaga mente jam cernam, quantorum in me rabies concitanda ſit. ibid. p. 478.

" having created the world, committed the care of it to Angels; who tranſgreſſing their duty, fell in love with women, " and begot children on them, whom we call Dæmons; who " ſubdued mankind to their power; partly by magical writings; partly by terrors, and puniſhments; and partly by " the inſtitution of ſacrifices, fumes, and libations; of which " they began preſently to ſtand in need, after they had enſlaved " themſelves to their luſts and paſſions, *&c.* [1]." And in another place, " the truth, ſays he, ſhall come out; that evil " Dæmons of old debauched women and corrupted boys, and " ſpread terrors among men; who did not examine things by " reaſon; but ſeized with fear, and not knowing, that theſe " Dæmons were evil ſpirits, called them Gods, and gave every " one that name, which they had each taken to themſelves. " But when *Socrates* by true reaſon endeavoured to expoſe their " practices, and draw men away from their worſhip, they, " by the help of wicked men, took care to get him put to death, " as an Atheiſt and impious perſon [2]."

Is this from Enoch
or
Indostan Brama?

He profeſſes likewiſe the higheſt regard for certain ſpurious books, which were publiſhed under the names of the *Sibyl* and *Hyſtaſpis*; which he treats with the ſame reverence as the Prophetic Scriptures; appeals to them as divine, and ſays, that " *by the contrivance of Dæmons, it was made a capital crime to* " *read them,* in order to deter men from coming at the knowledge of what was good, and keep them ſtill in ſubjection to " themſelves: which yet, adds he, they were not able to effect: " for we not onely read them freely without fear, but offer them

Sibil.

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[1] Οἱ δὲ ἄγγελοι, παραβάντες τήνδε τὴν τάξιν, γυναικῶν μίξεσιν ἡττήθησαν, ϗ παῖδας ἐτέκνωσαν, οἵ εἰσιν οἱ λεγόμενοι δαίμονες, &c. Apol. 2. p. 112.

[2] Εἰρήσεται γὰρ τ᾽ ἀληθές. ἐπεὶ τὸ πάλαιον δαίμονες φαῦλοι ἐπιφανείας ποιησάμενοι, ϗ γυναῖκας ἐμοίχευσαν ϗ παῖδας διέφθειραν. &c. ib. Apol. 1. p. x.

" alſo, as you ſee, to your peruſal; knowing, that they will " be found acceptable to all [1]." And it is certain, that from this example and authority of *Juſtin*, theſe ſilly writings were held in the higheſt veneration by the Fathers and rulers of the Church, thro' all ſucceding ages.

Clemens.

Clemens of Alexandria ſuppoſes them to have been inſpired by God, in the ſame manner as the Prophets of the Old Teſtament: which he confirms by the authority both of St. *Peter* and of St. *Paul*, whom he cites as appealing to them, for a prediction of the life and character of *Jeſus*. " For as God, ſays " *Clemens*, out of his deſire to ſave the *Jews*, gave them Pro" phets, ſo raiſing up Prophets alſo to the *Greeks*, from their " own nation and language, as far as they were capable of re" ceiving that good gift of God, he ſeparated them from the " vulgar, as not onely the Preaching of *Peter*, but the Apoſtle " *Paul* alſo declares, ſpeaking thus; *take the Greek books into* " *your hands, and look into the* Sibyl, *how clearly ſhe ſpeaks of one* " *God, and of the things to come: then take* Hyſtaſpes *alſo and read,* " *and you will find the Son of God much more clearly and evidently* " *deſcribed: and that many Kings ſhall employ all their forces againſt* " *Chriſt, out of their hatred to him, and to all who bear his* " *name* [2]."

Hystaspes.

The

Κήρυγμα Πέτρυ.

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[1] Καὶ Σίβυλλα δὲ ϗ Υστασπις, γενήσεσθαι τῶν φθαρτῶν ἀνάλωσιν διὰ πυρὸς ἔφασαν. Apol. 1. p. 30.

Κατ' ἐνέργειαν δὲ τῶν φαύλων δαιμόνων, θάνατος ὡρίσθη κατὰ τῶν τὰς Υστάσπου, ἢ Σιβύλλης, ἢ τῶν προφητῶν βίβλους ἀναγινωσκόντων. &c. ib. p. 67.

[2] Clem. Alex. Strom. l. 6. p. 761. Edit. Ox. The *Preaching of Peter*, Κήρυγμα Πέτρου, was the title of a ſpurious book, aſcribed to that Apoſtle: which is often cited as genuin by *Clemens, Origen*, and the other Fathers, and was forged probably in the age, immediately ſucceding to that of the Apoſtles. [Vid. Cave Hiſt. Litt. V. 1. p. 6. it. Grab. Spicil. Patr. T. 1. p. 62.] The paſſage alſo cited here from St. *Paul*, was taken from ſome other ſpurious piece now unknown, which then paſſed for the work of that Apoſtle. [Vid. Not. ad loc. Clem.] *Hyſtaſpes* is called by *Lactantius*, a *moſt ancient King of the*

The heathens on the other hand charged the Chriſtians with the forgery of theſe books, and gave the title of *Sibylliſts*, by way of contempt, to thoſe, who held them to be divine [1]. Which charge the Fathers conſtantly denied and treated as a pure calumny [2]: Yet all the Critics of theſe days allow the fact

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the Medes: [l. 7. c. 16.] and by *Ammianus Marcellinus, the Father of Darius:* and is ſaid to have been a maſter of all the doctrine of the *Magi*. Vid. Amm. Marc. l. 23. c. 6. & Not. Valeſ.

[1] *Origen*, ſpeaking of *Celſus* ſays; Εἶπε δέ τινας εἶναι καὶ Σιβυλλιστὰς, &c. Con. Cel. l. 5. 272.

Celsus

Origen

[2] *Celſus* having charged the Chriſtians with inſerting many blaſphemous paſſages into the verſes of the *Sibyl*, *Origen* obſerves in anſwer to him, *that he had neither produced any paſſages, ſo inſerted, nor any antient and correct copies of the verſes themſelves, which wanted ſuch paſſages; which he ought to have done, if he had been able.* [l. 7. 369.] this indeed was, to put the controverſy upon a right foot; by which however, as the learned *Valeſius* remarks, *Celſus might eaſily have made good his charge, and detected the forgery.* [Not. in Euſeb. Vit. Conſtant. p. 700. Edit. Cant.] If he did not therefore produce any old copies, which wanted the paſſages in quæſtion, the reaſon of it muſt be, that he either thought it unneceſſary, in a caſe ſo manifeſt, or that the books themſelves were not eaſy to be found.

The ſucceding Fathers treat the ſame objection in a manner wholly equivocal and evaſive. *Lactantius*, after he has alledged many verſes from the Sibyl, in which the principal acts and miracles of *Jeſus* are circumſtantially deſcribed, ſays; "thoſe, "who are confuted by theſe teſtimonies, "uſually fly to this ſhift, of declaring theſe "verſes, not to be the *Sibyl*'s, but forged "and compoſed by our people: which "no man will believe, who has read "*Cicero and Varro*, and the reſt of the antient writers, who make mention of the "*Erythræan* and the other *Sibyls*, and "who were all dead before Chriſt was "born." [De Ver. Sap. l. 4. 15.] The four following verſes, cited from the *Sibyl* by *Lactantius*, will ſerve as a ſpecimen of the reſt.

Εἰν ἄρτοις ἅμα πέντε καὶ ἰχθύεσσι δυοῖσιν
Ἀνδρῶν χιλιάδας ἐν ἐρήμῳ πέντε κορέσσει.
Καὶ τὰ περισσεύοντα λαβὼν μετὰ κλάσματα πάντα,
Δώδεκα πληρώσει κοφίνους εἰς ἐλπίδα πολλῶν.

With five loaves and two fiſhes
He will ſatisfy five thouſand men in the deſert.
Then gathering up the fragments, which remain,
He will fill twelve baſkets for the confirmation of many.

Eusebius

Euſebius has preſerved an *Acroſtick*, ſaid to have been taken from the *Erythræan Sibyl*; in which the initial letters of each line compoſe the following greek words, Ιησοῦς Χριστὸς, Θεοῦ Ὑιὸς, Σωτὴρ, Σταυρός *Jeſus Chriſt, Son of God, Saviour, Croſs.* He tells us however, "that many "people, fact to be true, and conſider it, as one of the pious frauds of thoſe primitive ages. *There is no man*, ſays Dr. *Cave*, *who does not ſee*, *that they were forged for the advancement of the Chriſtian faith* [1]. Some impute the Fraud to *Hermas*; ſome to *Papias*; and others to *Juſtin* himſelf. Mr. *Blondel* and Mr. *Dodwell* charge it upon the Heretics, called *Montaniſts*; but by a groſs miſtake,

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" people, tho' they allowed the *Erythræan* " *Sibyl* to have been a *Propheteſs*, yet " rejected this *Acroſtick*, ſuſpecting it " to have been forged by the Chriſtians.——but the truth, adds he, is " manifeſt: and our people have been ſo " exact in computing the times, as to " leave no room to imagine, that the " verſes were made after the coming of " Chriſt, and falſely ſent abroad, as the " predictions of the *Sibyl*. For it is agreed " by all, that *Cicero* had read this poem, " which he tranſlated into the latin tongue, " and inſerted into his own works." [Vid. Conſtant. p. 700. Ed. Cant.] Now the ſole ground of this confident aſſertion is, that *Cicero* ſpeaking of certain verſes, aſcribed to the *Sibyl*, which had really been forged by the partiſans of *J. Cæſar*, to ſerve a political deſign, after he has ridiculed the verſes themſelves, and the purpoſe of them, intimates, that they were compoſed in the form of an *Acroſtick*, *which was a work of labor and attention, not of madneſs or ecſtaſy, and could not therefore come from the Sibyl.* Div. 2. 54.

Austin

St. *Auſtin* has given us a latin tranſlation of the ſame *Acroſtick*, which he introduces thus; " The *Erythræan Sibyl* has indeed " written ſome things clearly and manifeſtly relating to Chriſt; which I have " read in the latin tongue, tho' in bad " verſes, thro' the unſkilfullneſs of the " tranſlator, as I afterwards underſtood. " For *Flaccianus*, an eminent perſon, who " had been Proconſul; a man of flowing " eloquence and great learning; as we " were converſing together on the ſubject " of Chriſt, produced a greek book, be" ing the verſes, he ſaid, of the *Erythræan* " *Sibyl*, where he ſhewed in a certain " place, how the initial letters of each " verſe were managed ſo, as to form the " words, Ιησοῦς, Χριστὸς, &c. " [De Civ. Dei, 18. 23.] But the ſame Father declares in another place, that *there were ſome, who ſuſpected all thoſe prophecies, which related to Chriſt, and paſſed under the name of the Sibyl*, to have been forged by the Chriſtians [ib. c. 46.] Upon which the learned Editor of his works, *Ludovicus Vives*, remarks, *that they could not be forged, becauſe they are cited both by Lactantius and Euſebius.* [Not. in loc.] Thus a moſt groſs and palpable forgery was impoſed upon the Chriſtian world, from the very midſt of thoſe beſt and pureſt ages; which tho' rejected and derided from the beginning by all men of ſenſe among the Heathens, yet obtained full credit in the Church, through all ages, without any other ground to ſupport it, but the utility of the deceit, and the authority of thoſe venerable Fathers, who contrived and atteſted it.

Vivos.

[1] Hadriano imperante, forſan circa ann. 136. nata videntur.—conficta eſſe, idque in gratiam Chriſtianae fidei nemo non videt. Cave Hiſt. litt. Vol. I. p. 57. Edit. Oxon.

as Dr. *Cave* obſerves, ſince *Montanus* was not in being, till forty years after *the Sibylline books* were known to the world [1].

Juſtin's Septuagint.

Juſtin affirms alſo that ſilly ſtory, concerning the *Septuagint verſion* of the Old Teſtament, " That it was made by ſeventy " Elders ſent for that purpoſe from *Jeruſalem* to *Ægypt*, at the " requeſt of King *Ptolemy:* whom that King ſhut up in as " many ſeparate cells, and obliged them, each to tranſlate the " whole Bible apart, and without any communication with " each other: yet all their ſeveral tranſlations were found to " agree verbatim from the beginning to the end; and by that " means were demonſtrated to be of divine inſpiration." And to raiſe the greater attention to his ſtory, he introduces it, by declaring, " that he is not telling us a fable or forged tale; but " that he himſelf had ſeen at *Alexandria* the remains of thoſe " very cells, in which the Tranſlators had been ſhut up [2]. But repeating the ſame ſtory in his Apology, he makes an unhappy blunder, by ſaying, that *King* Ptolemy'*s meſſage to beg the aſſiſtance of thoſe ſeventy tranſlators, was ſent to* Herod, *King of* Jeruſalem; whereas *Herod* happened to live about three hundred years later than *Ptolemy* [3]. Dr. *Grabe* endeavours to excuſe *Juſtin* by the help of a forced criticiſm, which the ingenious Editor of *Juſtin*'s Apology, with good reaſon derides; ſince this pious Father was certainly guilty here of that weakneſs, againſt which St. *Paul* warned both *Timothy* and *Titus*, of *giving too much heed to profane,* Jewiſh *and old woman's fables* [4];

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[1] Vid. Cave ib. p. 58. it. Dodwell. Diſſertation. Cyprian. 4. §. x.

[2] Ταῦτα οὐ μῦθος ὑμῖν ὦ ἄνδρες Ελληνες, οὐδὲ ϖεπλασμένας ἱστορίας ἀπαγγέλλομεν. ἀλλ᾽ αὐτοὶ ἐν τῇ Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ γενόμενοι, καὶ τὰ ἴχνη τῶν οἰκίσκων ἐν τῇ Φάρῳ ἑωρακότες ἔτι σωζόμενα &c. Cohort. ad Græc. p. 14.

[3] Ὅτε δὲ Πτολεμαῖος ὁ Αἰγυπτίων βασιλεὺς——ϖροσέπεμψε τῷ τῶν Ἰουδαίων τότε βασιλεύοντι Ἡρώδῃ &c. Apol. 1. p. 49. vid. Not. 8, 9.

[4] 1 Tim. iv. 7. Tit. i. 14. See Ant. Van Dale Diſſert. de Ariſt. p. 146.

and furniſhes a pregnant inſtance, how eaſily his prejudices might impoſe upon him in all other caſes of the like nature.

To theſe ſpecimens of his want of judgment, I might add ſeveral more, from his frequent uſe of *fabulous and apochryphal books*, forged by the firſt Chriſtians, under the names of the Apoſtles; and likewiſe from his falſe and negligent manner of quoting the genuin Scriptures. Dr. *Grabe* has collected ſeveral inſtances of the firſt ſort [1]; and his learned Editor finds frequent occaſion to animadvert upon the ſecond [2].

It will be ſaid perhaps, that theſe inſtances ſhew indeed a weakneſs of judgement, yet do not impeach the veracity of *Juſtin*, as a witneſs of fact. With regard to which, we muſt call to mind, what is hinted above, that the want of judgement alone may, in ſome caſes, diſqualify a man as effectually, from being a good witneſs, as if he wanted veracity too. For example, *Juſtin* expreſſly affirms, *that he had ſeen the cells, in which the ſeventy were ſhut up to the taſk of tranſlating the Bible.* Now it is certain, that there never were any ſuch cells, nor any ſuch tranſlators: and the beſt excuſe, which can be made for him is, that he was impoſed upon by ſome *Jews* or *Chriſtians* of *Alexandria*, who might ſhew him ſome old ruins, under the name of Cells, which his prepoſſeſſion in favor of the ſtory, owing to his natural credulity and want of judgement, made him take to be really ſuch.

Again, in his Apology, addreſſed to the Emperor and Senate of *Rome*, he charges them with paying divine honors to the Heretic and Impoſtor, *Simon*, of *Samaria*, commonly called the *Magician:* and for the truth of his charge, appeals

Simon Magus.

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[1] Vid. Grabe Spicileg. Patr. Tom. 1. p. 14. 327. it. p. 19.

[2] Vid. Juſt. Apol. 1. p. 87. quæ diſputat. de feris venenoſis &c. in deſerto. it. p. 92. Not. 6. it. p. 206. Not. 20. it p. 203. Not. 16. it. Not. 18. p. 327.

to a Statue, then ſubſiſting in *Rome*, and publicly dedicated to that *Simon* in the Iſland of the *Tiber*, with this Inſcription, SIMONI DEO SANCTO [1]. But it is manifeſt beyond all reaſonable doubt, as ſome learned men have ſhewn, that *Juſtin* was led here into a groſs blunder, by his uſual want of judgement and knowledge of *Roman* affairs, and his pre-conceived belief of certain fabulous ſtories, which paſſed current about this *Simon* among the firſt Chriſtians [2]; for the Statue and Inſcription, to which he appeals, were not dedicated to his Countryman, *Simon Magus*, of whoſe Deification there is not the leaſt hint in any *Roman* writer, but to a *Sabine Deity*, of ancient worſhip in *Rome*, and of ſimilar name, SEMONI SANCO [3], frequently mentioned by the old Writers: as the inſcription itſelf, dug up, about two centuries ago, from the ruins of that very place, or little iſland, which *Juſtin* deſcribes, has clearly demonſtrated [4].

Now ſhould we allow theſe caſes, to be clear of any fraud or deſign to deceive; yet they yield ſo bad a ſample of his underſtanding, as to render his teſtimony of very little weight in any other relation whatſoever. For if he was deceived in ſuch plain and obvious facts, where a common diſcernment and moderate knowledge of hiſtory, would have enabled him to have diſcovered the truth, how much the more eaſily would he be caught by a confederacy of ſubtle and crafty Impoſtors, employing all their arts to amaze and dazzle the ſenſes of the credulous, and to put off their ſurprizing tricks, for the miraculous effects of a divine power?

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[1] Ὃς ἐπὶ Κλαυδίου καίσαρος—θεὸς ἐνομίσθη καὶ ἀνδριάντι παρ᾽ ὑμῶν ὡς θεὸς τετίμηται. ὃς ἀνδριὰς ἀνεγήγερται ἐν τῷ Τίβερι ποταμῷ, μεταξὺ τῶν δύο γεφυρῶν, ἔχων ἐπιγραφὴν Ρωμαϊκὴν ταυτὴν, Σίμωνι Δέω Σάϛτῳ. Apol. 1. p. 39.

Juſtin was followed in the belief and aſſertion of this fact by all the ſucceding Fathers. *Irenæus*, *Tertullian*, *Auguſtinus*, *Epiphanius*, *Euſebius*.

[2] Vid. Ant. Van Dale de Statua Simoni Mago erecta. Diſſertat.

[3] *Sancus*, as *Dionyſius* writes, was a Deity of the old Sabines, whom ſome called Δία πίστιον. [Vid. Dionyſ. Hal. Antiq. l. 2. 49. it. 4. 58.] and the Romans *Deum Fidium*. And *Semones*, ſignified the ſame as Ημιθεοι, Demigods or Heroes deified. *Livy* mentions a Chappel of *Semo Sancus* in *Rome*—to whom the goods of certain enemies were conſecrated.—bona Semoni Sanco cenſuerunt conſecranda poſiti——in Sacello Sanci verſus ædem Quirini. Liv. 8. 20.

[4] SEMONI
SANCO
DEO FIDIO
SACRVM.
&c.

Gruter. Vol. 1. p. xcvi. 5. where there are ſeveral more Inſcriptions to the ſame Deity.

A blunder, or a trick of Justin and Lactantius.

I cannot diſmiſs this Father, without taking notice of an accuſation, which he frequently brings againſt the *Jews, that they had expunged many paſſages out of the* Greek *Bibles, in which the character and ſufferings of* Jeſus *were clearly deſcribed:* which charge all the learned of theſe later ages have found to be wholly groundleſs. Let us ſee then how he ſupports it. "They "have eraſed, ſays he, out of the book of *Eſdras*, the following words; *Eſdras* ſaid to the people, this paſſover is our "Saviour, and our refuge; and if you will but perſuade yourſelves, and be convinced in your hearts, that we are to humble him in a ſign or figure, and afterwards to put our truſt "in him; this place ſhall not be made deſolate to all ages, ſays "the Lord of Hoſts. But if you do not believe on him, nor "attend to his preaching, you ſhall be as dirt to the nations "[1]." The Editor of *Juſtin* remarks here, that this paſſage is not to be found, in any copies either of the *Apochryphal* or *Canonical Eſdras*; nor in any other Chriſtian writer, but *Lactanctius:* and inſtead of being expunged by the *Jews, appears to have been forged by the Chriſtians:* where he refers us to the cenſure of an able Critic and Proteſtant Divine, *John Croius*; who charges the forgery on *Juſtin* himſelf, in the following words; “ To propoſe what I think, freely and candidly; and “ what all honeſt and religious judges of theſe matters will “ allow to be true: I take this to have been a pious fraud of “ *Juſtin*, in which *Lactantius* followed him: who forged and “ publiſhed this paſſage, for the confirmation of the Chriſtian “ Doctrine, as well as the greateſt part of the *Sybilline Oracles*, “ and the Sentences of *Mercurius* [1].

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[1] Απὸ μὲν οὖν τῶν ἐξηγήσεων, ὧν ἐξηγήσατο Εσδρας εἰς τὸν νόμον τὸν περὶ τοῦ πάσχα. τὴν ἐξήγησιν ταύτην ἀφείλοντο, &c. Dial. 292.

Again, *Juſtin* affirms, that in the 90th Pſalm it was ſaid, *tell the nations that the Lord reigned from the tree:* and that the *Jews* had eraſed the words, *from the tree*. But as there is no footſtep of theſe words, either in the Vulgate, or any of the *Greek* or *Hebrew* copies, it is manifeſt, ſays the Editor, that *they were not expunged by the* Jews, *but added by the* Chriſtians [2]. Laſtly, he charges them *with expunging a paſſage of* Jeremiah, which yet he owns to be retained in ſome copies of their ſynagogues; as it actually is in all copies, both *Greek* and *Hebrew*, to this day. Upon which the Editor ſays, *that he abſolves the* Jews *again from all fraud, but cannot abſolve* Juſtin *from the utmoſt negligence and raſhneſs* [3]. So unlucky and injudicious was this Father, in his charge of theſe frauds on the *Jews*, as to give an occaſion only for fixing them after all upon the Chriſtians, and, in the opinion of ſome, even upon himſelf.

From the Tree.

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[1] Sed ſatis patet ab aliquo Chriſtiano confiсta eſſe, non a Judæis deleta.—Quod autem *Joannes Croius*, Obſervat. in. N. T. p. 205. *Juſtinum* hujus fraudis artificem fuiſſe affirmat, in eo ſane non Martyris noſtri, in quem iſta ſuſpicio non cadit, ſed ſuam potius ipſius exiſtimationem lædit, &c. Vid. Not. ad loc.

[2] Manifeſtiſſimum tamen eſt, hæc verba——non fuiſſe a Judæis reſecta, ſed ab aliquo Chriſtiano addita, &c. Not. ad Dial. p. 294.

[3] Καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν διὰ Ιερεμίȣ λεχθέντων ταῦτα περιέκοψαν. Ib. 293.

Nos quoque Judæos fraudis abſolvimus, *Juſtinum* ſummæ negligentiæ & temeritatis abſolvere non poſſumus. Not. ad loc.

The learned and ingenious Editor of his *Apologies* and *Dialogues*, who ſhews an inclination, to defend him on all occaſions, where he is defenſible, and on ſome, even where he is not, yet is often forced to break out into a kind of aſtoniſhment, at his ignorance, negligence, raſhneſs, credulity, ſo groſs in many inſtances, as to baffle all the art of criticiſm, nor to admit any certain rule, of collecting his real ſenſe. Yet *there are ſome ſtill*, ſays he, *who extol him, not onely as a moſt learned, but a moſt eloquent writer* [1].

Irenæus.

Irenæus, whoſe character and doctrines come next to be conſidered, was, of all the Fathers, whoſe works ſtill remain to us, the moſt diligent collector and aſſertor of *Apoſtolic traditions*. And in truth, as far as his judgement and veracity may be relied upon, he ſeems to have been well qualified for that character; being acquainted, as he tells us, with ſeveral, who had converſed familiarly with the Apoſtles, and curious alſo to inform himſelf, of all the particular doctrines, which they had ever taught by word of mouth. "He lived, ſays Mr. "*Dodwell*, ſo near to the times of the Apoſtles, as to be able, "to tranſmit their doctrines to poſterity with certainty and "fidelity, as they were delivered to him by oral tradition, "from their immediate Succeſſors and Diſciples [2]." Yet

Photius.

Photius, one of the ableſt Critics of his own, or any other age of the Church, has intimated a different character of him in the following ſhort cenſure upon his writings; in which, *he thought it neceſſary*, he ſays, *to advertiſe the reader, that in ſome of them, the purity of truth, with reſpect to Eccleſiaſtical doctrines,*

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[1] Vid. Edit. Lond. 1722. & Clariſſimi Thirlbii Annotat. ad p. 130, 206, 293, 378, &c. Et tamen ſunt, qui hunc non tantum doctiſſimum, verum etiam eloquentiſſimum eſſe prædicant. p. 305.

[2] Sufficit enim, ut Apoſtolorum tempora ita prope contigerit, ut quid ſenſerint Apoſtoli, poſſet orali traditione ad poſteros deducere, traditioniſque illius certus & fidelis eſſe teſtis. Diſſ. Iren. § 3.

is adulterated by his falſe and ſpurious reaſonings [1]. But the following inſtances of the doctrines which he delivers, as orthodox and *Apoſtolic,* will be the ſureſt rule of determining his real character, as well as the proper degree of credit, which may be due to his teſtimony.

J. C. 50, at least,

He affirms then, *that our Saviour lived to an old age, or was fifty years old at the leaſt*, at the time of his crucifixion; which he attempts to prove, firſt, from the reaſon of the thing; "that as Chriſt came to ſave all men, of all ranks and "degrees, ſo it was neceſſary, that he ſhould paſs through all "the ſeveral ſtages of life, that he might be a pattern to them "all: 2dly, from the unanimous tradition and poſitive teſti-"mony of all the old men, who had lived with St. *John*, and "the other Apoſtles, from whom, he ſays, they all received "this account, and conſtantly bore witneſs to the truth of it "[2]." Yet *this unanimous tradition*, ſo ſolemnly vouched by this venerable Father, is as certainly falſe, as the Goſpels are true. Dr. *Whitby*, after he has produced this ſame paſſage, cries out, as it were, with aſtoniſhment, "Behold here, ac-"cording to *Irenæus*, how all the Elders of *Aſia* teſtify with "one voice, that they had received from St. *John* and the "other Apoſtles, a tradition, concerning a fact manifeſtly "falſe! behold an *Apoſtolic* man, profeſſing to prove from St. "*John*'s *Goſpel*, things not onely contradictory to that Goſpel,

Whitby.

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[1] Phot Bibl. c. cxx.

[2] Sic & Senior in Senioribus, ut ſit perfectus Magiſter in omnibus, non ſolum ſecundum expoſitionem veritatis, ſed & ſecundum ætatem, ſanctificans ſimul Seniores, exemplum ipſis quoque ſiens——a quinquageſimo anno declinat jam in ætatem ſeniorem: quam habens Dominus noſter docebat. Sicut Evangelium & omnes Seniores teſtantur, qui in Aſia apud Joannem diſcipulum Domini convenerunt, id ipſum tradidiſſe eis Joannem. Permanſit autem cum eis uſque ad Trajani tempora. Quidam autem eorum non ſolum Joannem, ſed & alios Apoſtolos viderunt, & hæc eadem de ipſis audierunt: & teſtantur de hujuſmodi relatione. Iren. l. 2. c. 39. Edit. Oxon.

Cave

Papias

" but to the Articles of our Creed [1]! *&c.*" The learned *Cave* alſo, in his Life of *Irenæus* tells us, " that he was betrayed " into this error,—partly from a miſtaken report, which he " had ſomewhere picked up, (and it may be from his Maſter " *Papias*) and partly out of oppoſition to his adverſaries, who " maintained, that our Saviour ſtaid no longer upon earth, " than till the thirty-firſt year of his age; againſt whom the " eagerneſs of diſputation tempted him to make good his aſſertion from any plauſible pretence [2], *&c.*

Millennium.

Wonderful Vine!

Wonderful Wheat!

Papias

Polycarp.

He aſſerts likewiſe the doctrine of the *Millennium*, in the groſſeſt ſenſe of it, from the ſame authority of a tradition, handed down to him by all the old men, who had converſed with St *John*, and heard him relate, *what our Saviour himſelf uſed to teach concerning it:* of which he has recorded the following paſſage; " The days will come, in which there ſhall grow " vineyards, having each 10,000 vine ſtocks; and each ſtock, " 10,000 branches; each branch, 10,000 ſhoots; each ſhoot " 10,000 bunches; each bunch, 10,000 grapes; and each " grape ſqueezed ſhall yield twenty-five meaſures of wine; " and when any of the Saints ſhall go to pluck a bunch, another bunch will cry out, I am a better, take me, and bleſs " the Lord through me. In like manner a grain of wheat " ſown ſhall bear 10,000 ſtalks; each ſtalk 10,000 grains; " and each grain 10,000 pounds of the fineſt flower; and ſo " all other fruits, ſeeds and herbs in the ſame proportion, *&c.* " Theſe words, ſays he, *Papias*, a diſciple of St. *John*, and " companion of *Polycarp*, an ancient man, teſtifies in writing " in his fourth book, and adds, that they are credible to thoſe

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[1] Vid. Whitby Strict. Patr. in Joh. c. 8. 57. p. 220.

[2] Life of Iren. § x. p. 170.

"who believe [1]." The pious and cautious Dr. *Grabe* remarks on this occaſion, "that what *Irenæus* ſays here about "the ſtalks of grain, will be thought an argument of ſtraw "by thoſe, to whom ſuch things appear incredible: but, "that we ought not however, either to deny or affirm any "thing raſhly [2]." But *Euſebius* gives a frank and clear ſolution of the matter, by informing us, that *Papias was a weak man, of a very ſhallow underſtanding, as it appeared from his writings, and by miſtaking the meaning of the Apoſtles, impoſed theſe ſilly traditions on* Irenæus, *and the greateſt part of the Eccleſiaſtical writers, who reflecting on the age of the man, and his near approach to the Apoſtles, were drawn by him into the ſame opinions* [3].

Grabe

Euſebius.

Irenæus affirms alſo, on the ſame authority of tradition delivered to him by thoſe, who had received it from the Apoſtles, *that* Enoch *and* Elias *were tranſlated into that very Paradiſe, from which* Adam *was expelled*, to remain there, till the conſummation of all things: and that it was the ſame place, into which

Enoch. Elias.

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[1] Ταῦτα δὲ καὶ Παπίας, Ἰωάννου μὲν ἀκουστὴς, Πολυκάρπου δὲ ἑταῖρος γεγονὼς, ἀρχαῖος ἀνὴρ ἐγγράφως ἐπιμαρτυρεῖ.— Et adjecit, dicens, hæc autem credibilia ſunt credentibus. l. 5. p. 455.

Irenæus then procedes to confirm this doctrine, by the teſtimonies of the Prophets, *Iſaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and the revelations of St. John:* and contends, that it cannot be interpreted Allegorically, but will be fullfilled according to the letter in an earthly Jeruſalem.

[2] Hoc quod *Irenæus* pro ubertate & magnitudine fructuum ex *paleis* nectit argumentum, *Stramineum* fortaſſe vocaverint, quibus iſta ſunt incredibilia. Sed de hiſce nihil temere negandum, uti nec affirmandum. Annot. ad loc. p. 455.

[3] Σφόδρα γάρτοι σμικρὸς ὢν τὸν νοῦν. ὡς ἂν ἐκ τῶν αὐτοῦ λόγων τεκμηράμενον εἰπεῖν φαίνεται. πλὴν καὶ τοῖς μετ᾽ αὐτὸν πλείστοις, ὅσοις τῶν Εκκλησιαστικῶν, τῆς ὁμοίας αὐτῷ δόξης, παραίτιος γέγονε, τὴν ἀρχαιότητα τ᾽ ἀνδρὸς προβεβλημένοις. ὥσπερ οὖν εἰρηναίῳ, καὶ εἴ τις ἄλλος τὰ ὅμοια φρονῶν ἀναπέφηνεν. Euſ. Hiſt. l. 3. 39.

N. B. *Euſebius* indeed, in another place, ſpeaks of *Papias* in a very different ſtrain, as of a perſon *ſingularly remarkable for his eloquence and knowledge of the Scriptures.* [l. 3. c. 36.] But this paſſage, as the learned *Valeſius* informs us, is not found in any of the old copies, which he had conſulted, nor in the ancient verſion of *Rufinus*. Whence he concludes, that it was inſerted by ſome ignorant Scholiaſt, as being contradictory to what *Euſebius* had more explicitly delivered elſewhere of the ſame *Papias*. Vid. Not. Valeſ. ad loc.

Paul,

St. *Paul* alſo was caught up [1]. This is affirmed likewiſe by all the later Fathers, both *Greek* and *Latin*; induced to it, we may imagine, by the pretence of an Apoſtolical tradition: which yet from the abſurdity of it, muſt neceſſarily be as falſe, as the reſt abovementioned. *Feverdantius*, the learned Editor of *Irenæus*, remarks upon this place; that tho' *St.* Auſtin *does not allow this opinion to be a point of faith, yet ſince* Irenæus *and all the Primitive Fathers declare it to have been the doctrine of the Apoſtles, he cannot think it ſafe to believe otherwiſe* [2]. And we muſt needs own him to be in the right, if, according to the principles of the Church of *Rome*, we can think the poſitive teſtimony of *Irenæus*, or the concurrent authority of all the Fathers, of weight enough to bear down the common ſenſe and reaſon of mankind.

Septuagint

Esdras.

He aſſerts likewiſe very ſtrongly, the fabulous ſtory of the *Septuagint verſion*, with all the particulars already recited, of its miraculous birth, and the ſeparate cells, *&c.* To which he has added another, no leſs romantic; *that the ſacred Scriptures were utterly deſtroyed in the* Babyloniſh *captivity, but reſtored again, after ſeventy years, by* Eſdras, *inſpired by God for that purpoſe* [3]. And tho' in this alſo, he was followed by all the principal Fathers of the ſucceding centuries, yet as Dr. *Prideaux*, and other learned men have remarked, there is no better foundation for it, than that *fabulous relation, in the fourteenth chapter of the ſecond apochryphal book of* Eſdras: a book, too abſurd even *for the* Romaniſts *themſelves, to admit into their canon* [4]: and notwithſtanding the authority of *Irenæns*, and of all the other

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[1] Διὸ ϗ λέγȣσιν οἱ πρεσβύτεροι, τῶν Ἀποϛόλων μαθηταὶ, τȣ̀ς μεταλεθέντας ἐκεῖσε μεταλεθῆναι. &c. l. 5. p. 405.

[2] Vid. ibid. Not. 5.

[3] Ὅς—ἐν τῇ—αἰχμαλωσίᾳ τȣ̃, λαȣ̃ διαφθαρεισῶν τῶν γραφῶν—ἐνέπνευσιν Ἐσδρᾳ τῷ ἱερεῖ. &c. l. 3. c. 25.

[4] Prid. Connect. par. 1. p. 260. Vid. Ant. Van Dale Diſſert. de Ariſtea. p. 151.

Fathers, who aſſert the ſame opinion, Mr. *Tillemont* declares *it to be very dangerous to religion, and tending, extremely to weaken the authority of the Scriptures* [1]. He intimates alſo more than once, his belief, *of Angels mixing with the daughters of men:* where his Editor takes notice, that all the early Fathers were drawn into the ſame error, by the authority of the *Apocryphal book of* Enoch, cited by St. *Jude* [2]. Yet as monſtrous as this error was, it maintained its ground, as Dr. *Whitby* aſſures us, through the four firſt centuries; tho' St. *Chryſoſtom* treats it, as *abſurd and blaſphemous, and all, who eſpouſed it, as mad*; and *Theodoret* calls them *infatuated and very ſtupid* [3].

Enoch, cited by Jude

From ſome of the doctrines above mentioned, and particularly that of the *Millennium*, Mr. *Chillingworth* has proved againſt the *Romaniſts, that the Catholic Church, even in the earlieſt ages, and within thirty or forty years after the Apoſtles, was not infallible in matters of faith:* ſince all thoſe abſurdities were taught by the Fathers of thoſe ages, not as their private opinions onely, but as doctrines of the Univerſal Church, derived immediately from the Apoſtles, and held ſo neceſſary, that thoſe, who held the contrary, were hardly conſidered, as real Chriſtians: to which he adds the following remark; that if *Papias*, who firſt committed them to writing, *could either by his own error, or a deſire to deceive, cozen the Fathers of the pureſt age in this, why not alſo in other things? Why not in twenty, as well as one? And why might not twenty others do it as well as he* [1]*?*

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[1] Mais l'autorite de ces Peres ne l'empeche pas d'alleguer diverſe raiſons contre une opinion, qu'on peut dire tres dangereuſe a la religion, puiſqu'elle affoiblit extremement l'autorite de l'Ecriture. Memoir. Eccleſ. Tom. 3. p. 93.

[2] Cum Angeli tranſgreſſores commixti fuiſſent eis. l. 4. c. 70. p. 371. Not. 2. and l. 5. c. 29.

Neque *Judas Apoſtolus*, ad cujus teſtimonium *Tertullianus* provocat, libros *Enochi* canonicos fecit, dum quandam ex iis prophetiam de adventu Domini ad judicium allegavit. &c. Grab. Spicil. Patr. Vol. I. in Not. p. 344.

Hæc forte reſpexit S. Judas verſ. 6. ſcribens, Αγγέλους ἀπολιπόντας τὸ ἴδιον οἰκητήριον &c.—— Similiter ante ipſum S. *Petrus* in poſteriori epiſtola c. 2. v. 4. cujus obſcura quodammodo verba ex his Enochi verbis bene explicantur. ibid. p. 351.

[3] Obtinuit hæc ſententia apud patres fere omnes, qui quatuor primævis ſeculis floruerunt &c. vid. Whitby Strictur. Patrum. in Gen. c. vi. 4. p. 5.

As to *Irenæus*'s manner of expounding the Scriptures, it is much the ſame with that of *Juſtin*, or rather, according to Dr. *Grabe*, with that of the age, in which he lived: following no rule of criticiſm; nor giving any attention to the proper ſignification of words; but indulging a wild and enthuſiaſtic fancy, in the invention of typical ſenſes, and forced alluſions, utterly trifling and contemptible: *which thoſe, who read the Fathers, muſt always bear in mind*, as a learned Critic obſerves, *or they will be drawn into great and frequent errors* [1].

Treating of the diſtinction of Animals into clean and unclean, he ſays; “ The law foretold theſe things figuratively;
“ by animals denoting men. Thoſe, who divide the hoof
“ and chew the cud, it pronounces clean: thoſe, who do nei-
“ ther, unclean. Who then are clean? Thoſe, who believe
“ in the Father and the Son. This is their Firmneſs or double
“ hoof: and to meditate day and night on the laws of God,
“ ſo as to be adorned with good works, is to chew the cud.
“ But the unclean neither divide the hoof nor chew the cud:
“ that is, neither have faith in God, nor meditate on his laws.
“ This is the abomination of the Gentiles. But ſuch as chew

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[1] See his Additional Diſcourſes, p. 36, 37. at the end of his Works, in Edit. 7th.

[2] Quorum nec ſtylus magnopere eſt elaboratus, nec ratiocinationes ad rectæ rationis & veræ criticæ normam exactæ, nec notiones ſatis perſpicuæ, aut per omnia inter ſeſe conſentientes, nec principia uſquequaque vera. Quod iis, qui Scriptores Eccleſiaſticos legant, perpetuo animo obverſari oportet, ni in frequentes & graves errores incidere velint. Jo. Cleric. Hiſt. Eccleſ. p. 775.

" the cud, and do not divide the hoof, are unclean: this is a " figurative deſcription of the *Jews* [1]." With much more to the ſame purpoſe. In which method of reaſoning, as he followed *Barnabas*, and the Apoſtolic Fathers, ſo he was followed himſelf by the later writers; and eſpecially by *Clemens of Alexandria*, who has copied this very paſſage [2].

Barnabas
Clemens.

Again, endeavouring to prove that the *Moſaic law* was to fill up the middle age of the world, between the natural law, and the law of Chriſt, he ſays; " This was typically ſhewn " by many things, but eſpecially by *Thamar*, daughter-in-law " to *Judas*. For when ſhe was bringing out twins, one of " them put out his hand the firſt; and as the midwife ſuppoſed " him to be the firſtborn, ſhe tied a ſcarlet ſtring about his " hand. But when this was done, he drew in his hand again, " and his brother *Phares* came out firſt; and after him *Zara*, " who had the mark. The Scripture clearly manifeſting by it " the people, who had the ſcarlet ſign; that is, the faith pro- " feſſed by thoſe of the foreſkin; or the uncircumciſed: which " was firſt ſhewn out in the Patriarchs, and then withdrawn, " that it's brother might be brought out firſt; and then he be " born afterwards, who had been ſhewn before, and was " known by the ſcarlet ſign: which is the paſſion of the Juſt " one: præfigured from the beginning in *Abel*, deſcribed by " the Prophets, but perfected in the laſt days by the Son of " God [3.]

Thamar.

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[1] Prædixit hæc omnia figuraliter lex, de animalibus delineans hominem.—Qui ſunt ergo mundi? qui in Patrem & Filium per Fidem iter firmiter faciunt: hæc eſt enim firmitas eorum, qui duplicis ſunt ungulæ. &c. l. 5. c. 8.

[2] Καθαρὰ ϗ δεκτὰ τῷ Θεῷ ϖαραδίδωσιν ἡ γραφή· ὡς ἂν εἰς ϖατέρα ϗ εἰς υἱὸν διὰ τῆς ϖίστεως τῶν δικαίων τὴν ϖορείαν ϖοιουμένων· αὕτη γὰρ ἡ τῶν διχηλούντων ἑδραιότης. Strom. l. 7. XVIII. p. 900. Ed. Oxon.

[3] Hoc & per alia quidem multa, jam vero & per Thamar Judæ nurum typice oſtenditur. &c. l. 4. c. 42.

His reaſoning alſo upon the number of the Goſpels is in the ſame ſtrain: "It is impoſſible, ſays he, that there could have "been more or leſs than four. For there are four climates, "and four cardinal winds; and the Church is ſpread over the "whole earth; but the Goſpel is the pillar and foundation of the Church, and it's breath of life. The Church "therefore was to have four pillars, blowing immortality from "every quarter, and giving life to men [1], &c.

4 Winds.

I have been the fuller in opening the characters and opinions of *Juſtin* and *Irenæus*, that I might ſave myſelf the trouble of inlarging in the ſame manner on the reſt: eſpecially as their characters will be ſufficiently illuſtrated, by the ſpecimens of them occaſionally interſperſed, in the ſequel of this argument. But the later Fathers, generally ſpeaking, do but copy the notions, and even the blunders of theſe two. For as they are the earlieſt, who have left any conſiderable works behind them, ſo they are the firſt likewiſe in credit and authority with ſucceding ages, on the account of their piety, learning, and abilities: and the caſe was the ſame with the antients, as it is ſtill with the moderns; that when any facts or doctrines have once been eſtabliſhed by men of eminent character, they are uſually taken upon truſt by all who follow, till ſome new inquirer

arifes,

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[1] Neque autem plura numero quam hæc ſunt, neque rurſus pauciora capit eſſe Evangelia. Ἐπειδὴ—τέσσαρα κλίματα τȣ̃ κόσμȣ, ἐν ᾧ ἔσμεν, εἰσὶ, ϗ τέσσαρα καθόλικα πνεύματα. &c. l. 3. p. 220, 21.

N. B. This puts me in mind of a ſpecimen alſo of *Tertullian*'s judgment and way of reaſoning, on the quæſtion; *why the number of the Apoſtles was twelve*, and no other. I can account for this, ſays he, not onely by the voices of the Prophets, but by arguments drawn from things: for I find this number prefigured to us by the Creator. There were twelve wells in *Elim:* twelve gemms in the veſt of *Aaron;* twelve ſtones choſen by *Joſhua* out of the river *Jordan*, and depoſited in the Ark of the covenant: by all which the twelve Apoſtles were ſignified; who like fountains, were to water the dry deſert of the Gentile world; like gemms, to illuminate the ſacred Veſtment of the Church which Chriſt the High Prieſt put on: and like ſtones, were firm in the faith. Cont. Marcion. l. 4. p. 519. D.

This is as good as
Dupuis's 12 Signs
of the Zodiac. There
are 12 hours in a day
and also 12 pence
in a Shilling. 2. C. D

ariſes, who, not content with opinions impoſed on him by chance or education, reſolves to judge for himſelf, and to uſe his natural right and liberty of ſearching into the real grounds of them.

For inſtance; St. *Clemens of Rome* having alledged the ridiculous ſtory of the *Phœnix, as a type and proof of the reſurrection*; all the later Fathers take it from him of courſe, and refer us to the ſame bird, not onely as really exiſting, *but as created on purpoſe by God, to refute the incredulity of the Gentiles*, on the ſubject of this great article of our faith. Yet all the heathen writers, from whom they borrowed the ſtory, from *Herodotus*, down to their own times, treat it as nothing elſe but a mere fable [1]. The caſe is the ſame with all the other facts, and abſurd doctrines above ſpecified; of the *Millennium*; *of Angels debauching women, and begetting Dæmons*; *of the divinity of the Septuagint verſion*; *of the deſtruction of the ſacred Scriptures in the* Babyloniſh *captivity*, &c. In all which, theſe two Fathers, whoſe principles I have been illuſtrating, were implicitely followed, for a century or two at leaſt, by all their Succeſſors. *Irenæus* indeed ſtands ſingle in his account of *the old age of Chriſt*; tho' confidently affirmed by him, on the pretended authority of all the Apoſtles; becauſe it was evidently inconſiſtent with the hiſtory of the Goſpels. But the later Fathers generally ran into a contrary extreme, and affirmed, what was maintained by the *Heretics onely of* Irenæus's *days, that our Lord preached but one complete year, and died at the age of thirty:* which, according to *Clemens* of *Alexandria*, was both foretold by the

Clemens S. of Rome.
Phœnix.
Clemens of Alexandria.

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[1] 'Εμοὶ μὲν οὐ πιστὰ λέγοντες &c. Herodot. l. 2. § 73. Vid. it. Whitby Stricsur. Patr. in Pſalm xcii. 12. p. 85. it. Bochart. Hierozoic. Par. poſter. l. 6. c. 5. p. 817.

Prophets, and affirmed by the Evangeliſts [1]. Whereas from the hiſtory of the Goſpels, it is evident, that his miniſtry continued through *ſeveral ſucceſſive Paſſovers*, or as Sir *Iſaac Newton* has with great probability computed, through five; and that he died in his *thirty-fourth year* [2].

Now from what I have above collected, it is certain, that if a groſs abſurdity of opinions, and the belief of things impoſſible, be the proof of a weak mind; if expoſitions of the Scriptures, void of reaſon and common ſenſe, betray a great want of judgement, then we may juſtly charge thoſe defects upon theſe ancient fathers; from whoſe fooliſh reaſonings, both in religion and morality, whole books have been compiled [3].

Mr.

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[1] Καὶ ὅτι ἐνιαυτὸν μόνον ἔδει αὐτὸν κηρύξαι, καὶ τοῦτο γέγραπται οὕτως. ἐνιαυτὸν δεκτὸν κυρίου κηρύξαι· ἀπέστειλέ με. τοῦτο καὶ ὁ προφήτης εἶπεν, καὶ τὸ Εὐαγγέλιον. Strom. 1. p. 407. Vid. Not. in loc. Edit. Oxon. Quinto decimo anno imperii (Tiberii] paſſus eſt Chriſtus, annos habens triginta cum pateretur. Tertull. adv. Jud. p. 215.

[2] Thus have we, in the Goſpels of *Matthew* and *John*, all things told in due order, from the beginning of *John*'s preaching to the Death of Chriſt; and the years diſtinguiſhed by ſuch eſſential characters, that they cannot be miſtaken. Obſervat. on the Proph. of Dan. c. xi. p. 159.

[3] Vid. Dan. Whitby. Stricturæ Patrum——Traitè de la Morale des Peres. Par Jean Barbeyraç—— Dallæus &c.

N. B. I ſhall here take the liberty to tranſcribe the following note, from a very ingenious and candid Advocate of Chriſtianity, the Rev. *Archdeacon of Carliſle*, as it exhibits a juſt idea of the characters and writings of the earlieſt Fathers.

“ Chriſtianity was in it's infancy, at “ moſt in it's childhood, when theſe men “ wrote, and therefore it is no wonder, “ that they *ſpake as children*, that they “ *underſtood as children*, that they *thought* “ *as children*. This was according to the “ œconomy they were then under. And “ beſides, they had not time and leiſure “ to ſearch into the Chriſtian doctrines, “ nor had they laid in a ſufficient ſtock “ and fund for that purpoſe, they being “ but newly adopted into the Chriſtian “ Church: yet they were willing to appear “ in it's behalf, and to defend it as well “ as they could, which was accepted by “ Heaven [Edwards's Patrologia. p. 57.] “ Let me not be cenſured, tho' I ſhould “ be ſo bold as to ſay, that we ſhould “ have underſtood the Scriptures much “ better, if we had not had the writings “ of the Fathers; for they have obſcured “ and depraved them by their different “ and contrary comments: They have “ raiſed controverſies, taught men to quarrel and diſpute about the ſenſe of ſeve-

“ ral

Mr. *Dodwell*, one of their moſt zealous admirers, does not pretend to defend them on this head; but frankly owns, that their way of reaſoning is *looſe, ſophiſtical and declamatory*; *far ſhort of the ſolidity of the moderns*; *who excell them not onely in philoſophy and learning, but in the knowledge of antiquity, and even of their own languages:* and all that he pleads for in favour of their interpretations, eſpecially of the New Teſtament, is, *that they ſhould not be wholly ſlighted, though they have but little ſenſe in them, becauſe they were agreeable to the cuſtom or taſt of thoſe ages* [1].

As to the quæſtion of their veracity, it may admit perhaps ſome debate, and it will probably be thought harſh in the opinion of many, to ſuſpect men of ſuch piety and ſanctity of life, either of the invention, or the propagation of known forgeries. Yet there are many things ſo peremptorily affirmed, without any ground of truth or probability, by the two Fathers, whoſe characters I have been conſidering, as to give us too much cauſe for ſuch a ſuſpicion: which, as we have ſeen above, has been actually charged on *Juſtin*, by men of learning, and may, with equal reaſon, be charged alſo on *Irenæus*. For what other account can be given of his frequent appeals to the tradition and teſtimony of the Apoſtles, for the ſupport of ſo many abſurd and incredible doctrines? If the doctrines them-

Veracity! Veracity! Veracity!
To vindicate the Veracity of Politicians, Philosophers or Theologians in any age, would not be an easy Task. It would be easier to shew that in general they adopted another Rule.
When it is to combat Evil
'Tis lawful to employ the Devil.
Or Cato's "Corruptâ civitate
"Corruptio est licita".

" ral texts, which otherwiſe are plain and " obvious, and about ſeveral matters of " practice, which are evident enough in " themſelves, ſome of which are ſuperſtitious &c. ib. p. 135." See Conſiderations on the State of the world with regard to Religion &c. p. 174.

[1] Quin bonas litteras ſtudioſius excultas a nuperis noſtris Eccleſiæ Reformatoribus libenter agnoſcimus. Nec in philoſophia modo, ſed in antiquitate, in ipſis etiam linguis eorum temporum vernaculis. Sed & preſſiorem noſtris & ſolidiorem argumentandi methodum agnoſcimus, quam ſit alia illa laxior & ſophiſtica & declamatoria, quæ non apud Patres duntaxat; ſed & alios eorundem temporum Scriptores, erat receptiſſima Dodwell, Præfat. ad Diſſertat. in Iren. § 12.

Sic illis nimirum deferendum eſſe in Scripturarum interpretatione cenſemus, ut ne quidem ratiocinia alioqui minus ſolida, quæ tamen fuerint in more ſeculi, plane negligenda ſint, ib. § 16.

ſelves be falſe; the pretended tradition of them could not poſſibly be true: and if we abſolve *Irenæus* from the forgery; it muſt be charged on ſomebody elſe, more antient ſtill, and of authority enough, to impoſe it upon him; and on whomſoever it may fall, it gives but a lamentable idea of thoſe primitive ages, and primitive champions of the Chriſtian cauſe.

Papias.

Papias, who is ſuppoſed to have been the diſciple of St. *John*, and Biſhop of *Hierapolis*, is ſaid to have given riſe to moſt of the fabulous traditions, which obtained in thoſe early days. Dr. *Whitby* joins *Irenæus* to him, and ſays, "it is very "remarkable, that theſe two earlieſt writers of the ſecond century, who, on the credit of idle reports and uncertain fame, have "delivered to us things ſaid to be done by the Apoſtles and "their ſcholars, have ſhamefully impoſed upon us, by the "forgery of fables and falſe ſtories [1]." But whoever forged the reſt of the ſpurious traditions above recited, yet that, which relates to *the old age of* Jeſus, the moſt ſolemnly atteſted of them all, and peculiar to *Irenæus*, may be fairly preſumed to be his own forgery, becauſe it was never embraced by any body elſe, and was ſingularly adapted to the argument, which he was then aſſerting, in oppoſition to certain Heretics, called *Valentinians*, who allowed *but one entire year* to our Saviour's miniſtry [2].

But be that as it will; ſince the very earlieſt of all traditions, and the neareſt to the fountain's head, are found to be ſo corrupt; it will demonſtrate at leaſt, what a treacherous foundation they muſt be, to build any opinion upon, and much more, any article of our faith; which might be exemplified by many other inſtances from the hiſtory of the firſt centuries. For as ſoon as religious diſputes began to infeſt the Church, the plea of Apoſtolical tradition was preſently employed, as the moſt effectual to ſilence an adverſary; and was taken up therefore and urged with equal confidence by all ſides. And it is an argument indeed, which of all others ſeems the beſt calculated for the uſe of controverſy: for wherever it meets with credit, it muſt neceſſarily have great weight; and where it happens even to find none, yet it cannot eaſily be confuted; as not being reducible to any clear teſt, or fixed rule, by which it may be tried. It is not therefore ſtrange, to find its authority carried ſo high, and in ſome caſes, magnified even above the Scriptures themſelves, by all the dealers in controverſy, from the earlieſt Fathers down to Dr. *Waterland*.

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[1] Id denique imprimis obſervandum eſt, duos primos Scriptores ſecundi ſeculi, qui ex rumuſculis famaque dubia res geſtas a Domini Apoſtolis, eorumque diſcipulis nobis tradiderunt,—fabulis fingendis, falſiſque narrationibus, nobis turpiter illuſiſſe. Præf. ad Strictur. Patr. p. LXXIII.

[2] Ἐνιαυτῷ γὰρ ἑνὶ βούλονται αὐτὸν μετὰ τὸ βάπτισμα αὐτοῦ κεκηρυχέναι. Iren. l. 1. c. 1. p. 16.

For example; in that moſt antient and celebrated diſpute between the eaſtern and weſtern Churches, *about the time of holding their Eaſter*, St. *Polycarp*, Biſhop of *Smyrna*, the Diſciple and immediate Succeſſor of the Apoſtles, and *Anicetus* his contemporary, the Biſhop of *Rome*, ſeverally alledged the authority of *Apoſtolic tradition* for their different practice, from which neither of them could be induced to depart [1]. But *Papias*, as it is hinted above, the diſciple of *Polycarp*, was the chief promotor and aſſertor of it: "as oft, ſays he, as I met "with any one, who had converſed with the antients, I "always inquired very diligently after their ſayings and doc"trines: what *Andrew*, *Peter*, *Philip*, *John*,—and the reſt of "our Lord's Apoſtles uſed to teach. For I was perſuaded,

Polycarp.
Anicetus.
Papias.

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[1] Οὔτε γὰρ ὁ Ἀνίκητος τὸν Πολύκαρπον πεῖσαι ἐδύνατο μὴ τηρεῖν ἅτε μετὰ Ἰωάννου τοῦ μαθητοῦ τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν, καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν Ἀποστόλων, οἷς συνδιέτριψεν, ἀεὶ τετηρηκότα. &c. Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccl. l. 5. c. 24.

" that I could not profit ſo much by books, as by the voice of " living witneſſes [1]." *Irenæus*, the ſcholar of *Papias*, who had learnt the uſe of it from his maſter, was likewiſe a zealous aſſertor of it. " If a diſpute, ſays he, ſhould ariſe, about " any matter, tho' but of little moment, ought we not to have " recourſe to the moſt antient Churches, in which the Apoſ" tles reſided, and take from them what is certain and clear " about the point in quæſtion [2]?" *Tertullian* declares it to be the onely weapon, that can knock down an Hæretic: and in all ſuch controverſies, advances it's authority above the Scriptures; nay, forbids any appeal to the Scriptures, as hurtful to the cauſe of truth. *We muſt not appeal to the Scriptures*, ſays he, *or truſt the merits of the cauſe with them: in which there can either be no victory, or an uncertain one, or what is equivalent to uncertain* [3]. And in this, Dr. *Waterland* declares, *that he ſeems to have judged well, upon the prudential caſe, and like a wiſe and ſagacious man, with regard to the circumſtances of thoſe times* [4]. And in another place the ſame learned Doctor obſerves, from the authority of *Irenæus*, that *Polycarp had converted great numbers to the Faith by the ſtrength of tradition*; *being a ſenſible argument, and*

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[1] Εἰ δέ πȣ ϗ παρηλολȣθηκώς τις τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις ἔλθοι, τȣ̀ς τῶν πρεσβυτέρων ἀνέκρινον λόγȣς. τί Ανδρέας, ἢ τί Πέτρος εἶπεν, ἢ τί Φίλιππος, ἢ τί Θωμᾶς, ἢ Ιάκωβος, ἢ τί Ιωάννης, ἢ Ματθαῖος, ἢ τίς ἕτερος τῶν τȣ̃ κυρίȣ μαθητῶν. &c. Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccl. l. 3. c. 39. p. 136.

[2] Refert *Irenæus*, vir Apoſtolicorum temporum, & Papiæ, auditoris Evangeliſtæ Joannis, diſcipulus. Hieron. Ep. 53. ad Theodoram. Op. Tom. 4. par. 2. p. 581. Edit. Benedict.

Et ſi aliquibus de aliqua modica quæſtione diſceptatio eſſet, nonne oporteret in antiquiſſimas recurrere Eccleſias, in quibus Apoſtoli converſati ſunt, & ab eis de præſenti quæſtione ſumere quod certum & re liquidum eſt? l. 3. c. iv. p. 205.

[3] Ergo non ad Scripturas provocandum eſt: nec in his conſtituendum certamen; in quibus aut nulla aut incerta victoria eſt, aut par incertæ. De præſcript. Hæreticor. 19.

[4] Wherein to me he ſeems to have judged very well upon the prudential caſe, and like a wiſe and ſagacious man. Import. of the Doctr. of the Trin. p. 378.

more affecting, he ſays, *at that time, than any diſpute from the bare letter of the Scripture could be* [1].

Here then we ſee in ſhort, the origin and hiſtory of tradition. *Papias, a weak and ſilly man*, who miſtook the ſenſe of the Apoſtles, was the firſt, who made it his particular buſineſs to recommend the uſe of it, and for that purpoſe took the pains to collect all the unwritten facts and ſayings of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, from the report of thoſe, who had converſed with them. Theſe ſayings, as *Euſebius* tells us, conſiſted of a number of *ſtrange parables, and doctrines of our Saviour, with ſeveral other fabulous ſtories*; which the authority of ſo venerable a perſon, who had lived with the Apoſtles, impoſed upon the Church for genuine [2]: and the gravity of his ſcholar *Irenæus* confirmed and propagated to ſucceding ages: through which, every one ſtill added to the collection, whatever he thought uſeful to the particular cauſe or opinion, that he favored. This account of the matter, deduced from the teſtimony of antiquity itſelf, confutes at once all the extravagant encomiums, which our leading Divines ſo laviſhly beſtow on thoſe primitive Fathers, and their traditions. For if the earlieſt and beſt vouched traditions of all, which are tranſmitted to us, be true, or at all to be regarded, it follows of courſe, that we ought to receive the abſurd doctrines abovementioned, as articles of faith; *the fable of the Millennium*; *of Angels begetting Dæmons on the bodies of women*; *of the old age of Chriſt*, *of* Ænoch *tranſlated into* Adam*'s paradiſe*; with many more of the ſame ſtamp; which were all embraced by the earlieſt Fathers, and delivered to us, on the authority of the Apoſtles, by ſome of their immediate Succeſſors; and eſpecially by thoſe four, on whom Dr. *Waterland* lays the greateſt ſtreſs; *Juſtin Martyr*, *Athenagoras*, *Irenæus* and *Clemens* of *Alexandria*; "eminent perſonages, as he ſays, who floriſhed within fifty, ſixty, or at moſt ninety years from the Apoſtolic age. Whoſe nearneſs to the time; known fidelity; admirable indowments ordinary and extraordinary, add great weight to their teſtimony or doctrine, and make it a probable rule of interpretation in the prime things [1]." To which he ſubjoins in a marginal note, "that *Clemens*, tho' the lateſt of the four, yet teſtifies of himſelf, that he had received his doctrine from ſeveral diſciples

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[1] Ibid. p. 380. Not. y.

[2] Καὶ ἄλλα δὲ ὁ αὐτὸς συγγραφεὺς, ὡς ἐκ παραδόσεως ἀγράφου, εἰς αὐτὸν ἥκοντα παρατέθειται, ξένας τέ τινας παραβολὰς τοῦ Σωτῆρος καὶ διδασκαλίας αὐτοῦ, καί τινα ἄλλα μυθικώτερα. Euſeb. Hiſt. l. 3. c. 39.

N. B. Nothing more effectually demonſtrates the uncertainty of all tradition, than what is delivered to us by Antiquity, concerning this very *Papias*. *Irenæus* declares him, to have been *the companion of Polycarp, and the Diſciple of* St. *John* the Apoſtle. [l. 5. c. 33.] But *Euſebius* tells us, that he was not a diſciple of *John the Apoſtle*, but of *John*, called the *Elder or Preſbyter*, who was a companion onely of the Apoſtles: and whom *Irenæas* by miſtake imagined to be the Apoſtle. [Hiſt. l. 3. 38.] Now *Irenæus* might probably be born while St. *John* was ſtill living, and had converſed very familiarly in his youth with *Polycarp*, the diſciple of that Apoſtle, and declares, *that he retained the memory of all things which he had learnt from him, more diſtinctly, than of things, which had happened to him much later.* [Euſeb. 5. 20.] He was well acquainted alſo with *Papias*, whom he calls an ancient man: which makes it ſeem probable, both that *Papias* was contemporary with the Apoſtle *John*, and that *Irenæus* could not be miſtaken in his account of *Papias*'s maſter, which he might have received from *Papias* himſelf: and for this reaſon the generality of the modern writers prefer the authority of *Irenæus* to that of *Euſebius*, who lived two hundred years later. Yet after all, it is evident, from the expreſs words of *Papias*, as they are cited by *Euſebius*, that *Papias* had never perſonally heard or known any of the Apoſtles, but received his reports of them onely from thoſe, who had: and that *Irenæus* therefore was deceived by the identity of the name, and had never heard perhaps of that other *John*, called the *Preſbyter*; who is ſuppoſed by ſome of the principal Fathers, to have written *the ſecond and third Epiſtles*, as well as *the book of*

Uncertainties and contradictions concerning Papias.

John the Presbyter, supposed to have written the 2d and 3d Epistle and the Apocalypse.

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of Revelations, now aſcribed to the Apoſtle. [Euſeb. Hiſt. 3. 38. Hieron. Catalog. Scriptor. de Joan. Apoſt. & Papia.] The learned Mr. *Dodwell* therefore declares it to *be certain, that John, the Maſter of Papias, was a different man from the Apoſtle*; and conſequently that *Irenæus himſelf, and Polycrates his contemporary, and Clemens Alexandrinus alſo, who was but a little younger, were all miſtaken, with regard to this fact.* Diſſert. in Iren. 1. § IV.

[1] Import. of the Doctr. of the Trin. p. 369.

" of the very chief Apoſtles; who had truly preſerved the tra-" dition of the bleſſed doctrine, as it came directly from the " holy Apoſtles, *Peter*, *James*, and *John*." Notwithſtanding all which, the Doctor could not but know, that this very *Clemens* holds as many abſurd, unſound, and exploded doctrines, and deals as largely in the fabulous and apocryphal books of the primitive Chriſtians, as any other Father whatſoever. Theſe facts ſhew likewiſe the weakneſs of that argument, which the Doctor alledges for the truth of doctrines, from *the unanimity*, with which they are aſſerted by the antient writers. " This is the argument, " ſays he, which *Irenæus* and *Tertullian* inſiſt much upon and " triumph in, over the Hæretics of their days——for it is " highly unreaſonable to ſuppoſe, that Churches diſtant in " place, and of different languages, and under no common " viſible head, ſhould all unite in the ſame errors——Again, " ſuch unanimity could never come by chance, but muſt be " derived from one common ſource: and therefore the har-" mony of their doctrine was in itſelf a pregnant argument of " the truth of it [1]." But if the unanimity of the primitive Fathers muſt be allowed to have ſo great a force, as to evince the truth of any opinion, it would neceſſarily eſtabliſh all thoſe monſtrous doctrines above ſpecified; ſince it would be difficult to produce any other whatſoever, in which there was ſo great an harmony among them, or ſo general a conſent of the whole Church, through the three firſt centuries, and that intirely grounded upon the pretence of Apoſtolic tradition.

But I cannot diſmiſs this article of the doctrines and opinions of theſe antient Fathers, without taking notice of one, which was univerſally received and believed through all ages of the primitive Church, *viz.* " that there were a number of

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[1] Ibid. p. 372, 3.

" Magi-

Conjurors,

“ Magicians, Necromancers or Conjurers, both among the Gentiles and the Hæretical Chriſtians, who had each their particular Dæmons or evil Spirits, for their aſſociates, perpetually attending on their perſons, and obſequious to their commands; by whoſe help they could perform miracles, foretell future events, call up the Souls of the dead, exhibit them to open view, and infuſe into People whatever dreams or viſions they thought fit.”——All which is conſtantly affirmed by the Primitive Writers and Apologiſts, and commonly applied by them to prove the immortality of the Soul.

Justin

“ Let the powers of Necromancy, ſays *Juſtin Martyr*, and the evocations of human Souls, and of boys eſpecially who had ſuffered violent deaths, and of thoſe Spirits, whom the Magicians call the Inſpirers of dreams and aſſeſſors, and the works, which are performed by the ſkillful in theſe arts, convince you, that the ſouls of men exiſt ſtill after death [1].”

Lactantius.

Lactantius, ſpeaking of certain Philoſophers, who held, *that the ſoul periſhed with the body*, ſays, “ they durſt not have declared ſuch an opinion, in the preſence of any Magician, or if they had done it, he would have confuted them upon the ſpot, by ſenſible experiments; by calling up ſouls from the dead, and rendring them viſible to human eyes, and making them ſpeak and foretell future events [2].”

Recognitions of Clemens.

The Author of the book, called, the *Recognition of St. Clemens*, one of the moſt antient and moſt learned of thoſe many ſpurious pieces, which were forged by the firſt Chriſtians, affirms, “ that *Simon Magus* confeſſed to one of his compa-

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[1] Apol. 1. p. 27. Edit. Thirlb.

[2] Qui profecto non auderent de interitu animarum Mago aliquo præſente diſſerere, qui ſciret certis carminibus ciere ab Inferis animas, &c. Divin. Inſtitut. l. 7. c. 13.

“ nions,

Simon Magus.

“ nions, that he wrought all his amazing works, by the help “ of the Soul of an healthy young boy, who had been violently put to death for that purpoſe, and then called up from “ the dead, by ineffable adjurations, and compelled to be his “ aſſiſtant [1].”

Irenæus.

Irenæus, giving an account of the diſciples of the ſame *Simon*, tells us, “ that they lived lewdly, exerciſing magical arts, and “ uſing exorciſms, incantations, and love-charms, and induſtriouſly practiſing all other curious arts, by the aſſiſtance of “ their familiar Spirits and Inſpirers of dreams [2].” And ſpeaking afterwards of the Hæretic *Carpocrates* and his followers, he ſays, “ Theſe likewiſe practiſe magical arts, with “ incantations and love-charms, and have their aſſiſtant Dæmons and Inſpirers of dreams, with all the other malevolent “ Spirits [3].

Clemens

“ The Magicians, ſays *Clemens of Alexandria*, boaſt of Dæmons, as the Miniſters of their impiety, reckoning them “ part of their family, and forcing them by their incantations, “ to be the ſlaves of their will [4].

Tertullian

Tertullian declares of theſe Dæmons, “ that they had the “ power of inflicting horrible diſeaſes both on the minds and “ bodies of men, and even cruel deaths; yet they frequently “ contrived to cure the diſorders which they had wrought, in “ order to ſupport the credit of their divinity, and the honor

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[1] Pueri, inquit, incorrupti & violenter necati animam adjuramentis ineffabilibus evocatam adſiſtere mihi feci, & per ipſam fit omne quod jubeo. lib. 2. c. XIII. Edit. Cotelerii.

[2] Igitur horum Myſtici Sacerdotes libidinoſe quidem vivunt; Magias autem perficiunt—exorciſmus & incantationibus utuntur, &c. Adv. Hæreſ. l. 1. c. xx.

[3] Artes etiam Magicas operantur & ipſi, & incantationes & philtra. Quoque & chariteſia, & paredros, & oneirepompos & reliquas malignationes, &c.—ib. c. XXIX.

[4] Μάγοι δὲ ἤδη ἀσεβείας τῆς σφῶν αὐτῶν ἱπηρέτας δαίμονας αὐχοῦσιν. &c. Cohort. ad Gent. p. 52. Edit. Potter.

" of their Altars, and ſecure to themſelves their proper food " and nouriſhment from the rich ſteams and blood of the " victims, which were offered to them [1]." For this likewiſe, as monſtrous as it is, was the common opinion of all the Fathers, taken, as uſual, upon truſt, from the authority of *Juſtin Martyr*, who was probably the inventor of it, " that " the Dæmons, after they had given themſelves up to their " luſts and lewd debaucheries with boys and women, began to " want the rich fumes and the fat of ſacrifices, to ſtrengthen " them for the enjoyment of their luſtfull pleaſures [2]."

Cyprian.

Cyprian affirms, " that they commonly lay lurking within " the ſtatues and images of the Heathen Deities; inſpired the " breaſts of the Southſayers; animated the fibres of the entrails " of victims; directed the flight of birds, and the chances of " lots; involving falſehood always with truth, and themſelves ſometimes deceived, as well as deceiving others; diſquieted the lives of men; diſturbed their ſleep; excited terrors in their minds, convulſions in their bodies; deſtroyed " health, and brought on diſeaſes, ſo as to force people to " worſhip them; that being filled and fatted by the ſteams of " Altars and burnt ſacrifices, they might ſeem to cure the " maladies, which they had inflicted; whereas all the cure, " which they performed, was by ceaſing onely to do hurt [3]."

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[1] Itaque corporibus quidem & valetudines infligunt, & aliquos caſus acerbos; animæ vero repentinos, & extraordinarios per vim exceſſus.—Ut ſibi pabula propria nidoris & ſanguinis procuret——Benefici plane & circa curas valetudinum. Lædunt enim primo, dehinc remedia præcipiunt. Apologet. c. 22. Pluribus notum eſt Dæmoniorum quoque opera & immaturas & atroces effici mortes.—De Anim. c. 57.

[2] Ὧν ἐνδεεῖς γεγόνασι μετὰ τὸ ϖάθεσιν ἐπιθυμιῶν δȣλωθῆναι, &c. Apol. p. 113. Edit. Thirlb.

[3] Hi ergo Spiritus ſub ſtatuis & imaginibus conſecratis deliteſcunt. Hi afflatu ſuo Vatum pectora inſpirant, &c. De Idolor. Van. p. 206.

And as the whole ſyſtem of Pagan Idolatry was believed by the Fathers, to have been managed by the craft and agency of Dæmons, ſo the whole art of Magic was ſuppoſed alſo to be carried on by the ſame powers, for the ſake of deluding and deſtroying mankind. In the caſe of idolatry, they imagined them to aſſume the names, and to act the parts of the Heathen Gods, and in Magic to aſſume the forms of departed ſouls, and to appear under the names of thoſe, who were called up from the dead; and as ſuch, to foretell future events, and anſwer to all quæſtions, which ſhould be demanded of them. And the reaſon which they give, why the ſouls called up from the dead, were chiefly of thoſe, who had been put to a violent death, is, becauſe ſuch ſpirits were generally thought to be the moſt malevolent and revengeful, and ready to perpetrate the ſame acts of violence on others, which they themſelves had injuriouſly ſuffered [1].

Now the opinion, which I have here explaned, is not onely a proof of the groſſeſt credulity, but of that peculiar ſpecies of it, which, of all others, lays a man the moſt open to the deluſive arts of Impoſtors. For a mind, ſo totally poſſeſſed by ſuperſtitious fancies, and diſturbed by vain terrors, could not have either the judgement to diſcern, or the inclination to examine, or the courage even to ſuſpect the pretenſions of thoſe vagrant Jugglers, who, in thoſe primitive ages, were ſo numerous, and ſo induſtriouſly employed in the affair of deluding their fellow creatures. Every man will perceive, how eaſy it muſt have been to men of that claſs, whether Heathens, Jews, or Chriſtians, (for they are all allowed to have had ſuch Impoſtors among them) to impoſe the tricks of their art, as the effects of a ſupernatural power, on a multitude already perſuaded, that they lived on magic ground, expoſed at every ſtep to ſnares and charms, contrived by malicious Spirits, perpetually haunting them, and watching every unguarded moment, to get poſſeſſion both of their ſouls and bodies [1]. And when pious Chriſtians are arrived to this pitch of credulity, as to believe, that evil ſpirits or evil men can work real miracles, in defiance and oppoſition to the authority of the Goſpel, their very piety will oblige them, to admit as miraculous, whatever is pretended to be wrought in the defence of it, and ſo make them of courſe the implicit dupes of their own wonder-workers.

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[1] Itaque invocantur quidem aori & Biæothanati, ſub illo fidei argumento, quod credibile videatur, eas potiſſimum animas ad vim & injuriam facere, quas per vim & injuriam ſævus & immaturus finis extorſit, quaſi ad vicem offenſæ. Tert. de anim. c. 57. Cypr. ib. 206.

IV. I ſhall now procede, as I propoſed, to take a particular review of all the ſeveral gifts, or miraculous powers, which were actually clamed, and pretended to have been poſſeſſed by the primitive Church: which, according to the teſtimonies produced above, were, *the power of raiſing the dead*; *of healing the ſick*; *of caſting out Devils*; *of propheſying*; *of ſeeing viſions*; *of diſcovering the ſecrets of men*; *of expounding the ſcriptures*; *of ſpeaking with tongues.*

Raising the dead Sect. 1. As to the firſt, and the principal indeed of all miracles, that of raiſing the dead; it was frequently performed, as *Irenæus* affirms, *on neceſſary occaſions*; *and men ſo raiſed had lived afterwards among them many years*; but it is very ſtrange, that from the time of the Apoſtles, there is not an Inſtance of this miracle to be found in the three firſt centuries; except a ſingle caſe, ſlightly intimated by *Euſebius*, from the books of

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[1] Nam & ſuggeſſimus nullum pæne hominem carere Dæmonio. Tert. ib.

Papias;

Papias; which he ſeems to rank, among the other fabulous ſtories delivered by that weak man [1].

It is certain, that if a miracle of ſo ſurprizing a nature, had been ſo frequent, as *Irenæus* affirms it to have been; or performed, as it were, in every pariſh, or place where there was a Chriſtian Church, it muſt have made great noiſe in the world, and been celebrated, not onely by the primitive Fathers, but by all the Hiſtorians of thoſe times. But it was ſo far from being commonly or openly effected, as every miracle ſhould neceſſarily be, which is wrought for the converſion of Infidels, that all the enemies of the Goſpel, as *Irenæus* himſelf confeſſes, conſtantly affirmed *the thing itſelf to be impoſſible* [2]. A ſure proof, that they had never ſeen or known it to be done, unleſs in ſuch a manner, as carried with it a ſtrong ſuſpicion of fraud or colluſion. Mr. *Dodwell* however, from this ſingle authority of *Irenæus*, aſſerts the miraculous powers of the ſecond century, to be ſuperior even to thoſe of the firſt, or Apoſtolic age. *They raiſed the dead*, ſays he, *in the Apoſtolic Churches*; *yet we have few examples of it, in the genuin acts of the Apoſtles: but in* Irenæus*'s days*, *they raiſed not a few*, *but very often* [3]. And in the ſame ſtrain he runs through all the other miracles of the primitive times, and gives them the preference, in their number at leaſt, to thoſe of the Apoſtles; yet is forced to own, after all, that towards the end of the ſecond century, and while *Irenæus* himſelf might be ſtill living, this power of raiſing the dead was loſt and vaniſhed. For in the very ſame age, when one *Autolycus*,

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[1] Νεκρȣ̃ γὰρ ἀνάϛασιν, κατ' αὐτὸν γεγονυῖαν ἱϛορεῖ. ϗ αὖ πάλιν ἕτερον παράδοξον περὶ Ἰȣ̃ϛον, &c. Hiſt. Eccl. 3. 39.

[2] Tantum enim abſunt ab eo, ut mortuum ipſi excitent, ut ne quidem credant, hoc in totum poſſe fieri. Iren. l. 2. c. 56.

[3] Excitabant mortuos in Eccleſiis Apoſtolicis, quos tamen raros legimus,—excitabant ſimiliter mortuos *fraternitates Irenæi*.—nec illos tamen adeo raros ſed ſæpiſſime. Diſſert. 2. in Iræn. § XLII. p. 165.

lycus, an eminent heathen, challenged his friend *Theophilus*, Biſhop of *Antioch*, a convert and champion of the Goſpel, *to ſhew him but one perſon, who had been raiſed from the dead*, on the condition of turning Chriſtian himſelf upon it; *Theophilus* diſcovers by his anſwer, that he was not able to give him that ſatisfaction [1]. Upon which Mr. *Dodwell* remarks, *that the great number of perſons, who had been raiſed ſome years before, when the fact was common, were dead again for the ſecond time in this interval*; which, for the ſake of his hypotheſis, he ſtretches, as well as he can, to *forty years* [2]. But in truth, the fact itſelf, as delivered by *Irenæus*, ſeems to be utterly incredible on many accounts: 1ſt, that a caſe of ſo wonderful a nature, ſhould be common among them, yet not a ſingle inſtance of it particularly deſcribed, or clearly atteſted in all hiſtory. 2dly, That it ſhould be performed in every part of the world, where there was a Church or aſſembly of Chriſtians; yet all thoſe, who were not of the Church, and for whoſe ſake it was chiefly performed, ſhould be inſiſting all the while, *that the thing itſelf was impoſſible.* 3dly, That it ſhould be common in the days of *Irenæus*, yet *Theophilus*, who lived at the ſame time, ſhould not be able to alledge a ſingle inſtance of it, when challenged to it by his friend, whom he was laboring to convert, and who offered to be converted upon the proof of that fact. Laſtly, that a power, of all others, the moſt affecting and reputable to the Church, ſhould be withdrawn at a time, when it's adverſaries were defying them to ſhew any effects of it, and putting the merits of the controverſy upon that very iſſue [1]. All which circumſtances laid together, muſt needs leave the ſtrongeſt ſuſpicion on the claim of the primitive Church, with regard to this prime miracle of *raiſing the dead*.

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[1] Φὴς γὰρ, δεῖξόν μοι κᾂν ἕνα ἐγερθέντα ἐκ νεκρῶν, ἵνα ἰδὼν ϖιςώσω, &c. Theoph. ad Autol. l. 1. p. 77. c. Ad finem Oper. Juſt. Mart. Pariſ. 1639. Defecere item *mortuorum excitationes*. Certe Autolyco roganti vel unum oſtenderet qui fuiſſe e mortuis revocatus, ita reſpondit *Theophilus*, quaſi vel unum demonſtrate minime potuerit. Diſſert. in Iren. 2. § XLIV. p. 171.

[2] Quo temporis intervallo rurſus obierint, qui ſub initium *Marci Aurelii* fuiſſent in vitam revocati. ibid.

Healing the Sick.

Sect. 2. The next gift ſaid to have reſided in it, is that *of healing the ſick and curing all ſorts of diſeaſes:* in favor of which the ancient teſtimonies are more full and expreſs; tho' with ſome variation, concerning the method of cure. Some affirm, that it was done by *the impoſition of hands* [2]: ſome, *by invoking the name of God, and of Jeſus, and reciting ſome ſtory of his life* [3]. *And others*, by the uſe of *oil:* which was conſecrated by Holy men, and diſpenſed to the people for the cure of their diſeaſes. *Tertullian* tells us, "that a Chriſtian called *Proculus* cured the "Emperor *Severus* of a certain diſtemper by the uſe of oil: for "which ſervice that Emperor was favorable afterwards to the "Chriſtians, and kept *Proculus*, as long as he lived, in his "palace [4]." And St. *Jerom* affirms, "that *Hilarion the Monk* "uſed to heal all the wounds of the Huſbandmen and Shepherds with *conſecrated oil:* and preſerved the life of the ſon-"in-law and daughter of an holy woman called *Conſtantia*, by "anointing them with the ſame [5]." Yet theſe cures, if true, might be accounted for probably without a miracle, by the natural power and efficacy of the oil itſelf, ſince in our days, the bite of vipers, after inflaming a man's arm to a degree, which threatened deſtruction to him, is known to have been checked and cured in a ſhort time by the application of oil: which might perhaps have been the very caſe of *Hilarion's Shepherds*. But be that as it will, the pretence of curing diſeaſes by a miraculous power, was ſo ſucceſsfully maintained in the heathen world by fraud and craft, that when it came to be challenged by the Chriſtians, it was not capable of exciting any attention to it, among thoſe, who themſelves pretended to the ſame power; which, tho' the certain effect of impoſture, was yet managed with ſo much art, that the Chriſtians could neither deny nor detect it; but inſiſted always, that it was performed by *Dæmons* or evil Spirits, deluding mankind to their ruin: and from the ſuppoſed reality of the fact, inferred the reaſonableneſs of believing, what was more credibly affirmed by the Chriſtians, to be performed by the power of the true God. *We do not deny*, ſays *Athenagoras*, that *in different places, cities, and countries, there are ſome extraordinary works performed in the name of idols, from which ſome have received benefit, others harm.* But then he goes on to prove, that they were not performed by God, but by *Dæmons* [1]. "If I ſhould allow, ſays *Origen*, "that there is a Dæmon cunning in medicine, called *Æſcula-* "*pius*, who cures diſeaſes: yet I would ſay to thoſe, who are "ſurprized at it, as well as at the predictions of *Apollo*, that if "the cure of diſeaſes and prædiction of events be things of an

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[1] This ſhews the vanity of that diſtinction, which ſome are apt to make, between the primitive, and the Popiſh miracles; that the firſt were wrought for the ſake, and in the midſt of unbelievers; the laſt among the faithful onely. Contra, recentiorum pleraque in *fideles*; in infideles pauciſſima, edita feruntur. Dodw. ib. § LXIII.

[2] Ἄλλοι δὲ τοὺς κάμνοντας διὰ τῆς ἐπιθέσεως τῶν χειρῶν ἰῶνται. Iren. l. 2. c. 57.

[3] Οὐδὲν ἄλλο καλοῦντες ἐπὶ τοὺς δεομένους θεραπείας, ἢ τὸν ἐπὶ πᾶσι θεὸν, καὶ τὸ τοῦ Ιησοῦ ὄνομα, μετὰ τῆς περὶ αὐτοῦ ἱστορίας. Con. Celſ. l. 3. p. 124.

[4] Ipſe etiam Severus,—Chriſtianorum memor fuit. Nam & *Proculum* Chriſtianum, qui eum per oleum aliquando curaverat, requiſivit, & in palatio ſuo habuit uſque ad mortem ejus. Ad Scapul. § 4.

[5] *Benedicto itaque oleo*, univerſi agricolæ atque paſtores, tangentes vulnera, certam

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certam ſalutem reſumebant. Hieron. in Vit. Hilarion. Oper. Tom. 4. Par. 2. p. 86.

Sed & *Conſtantia* quædam, ſancta fœmina, cujus generum & filiam de morte liberaverat *unctione olei*. ibid. p. 90.

[1] Τὸ μὲν δὲ κατὰ τόπους καὶ πόλεις καὶ ἔθνη γίνεσθαί τινας ἐπ᾽ ὀνόματι εἰδώλων ἐνεργείας, οὐδ᾽ ἡμεῖς ἀντιλέγομεν. Athenag. Apol. p. 25.

" indifferent nature, and which belong to bad, as well as to " good beings; ſhew me that thoſe, who cure and foretell, " are not bad, but good, and worthy to be held in a manner " as Gods [1].

Whatever proof then the Primitive Church might have among themſelves of this miraculous gift, yet it could have but little effect towards making proſelytes among thoſe, who pretended to the ſame gift; poſſeſſed more largely, and exerted more openly, than in the private aſſemblies of the Chriſtians. For in the Temples of *Æſculapius*, all kinds of diſeaſes were believed to be publickly cured, by the pretended help of that Deity: in proof of which there were erected in each Temple *columns or tables of braſs or marble*, on which a diſtinct narrative of each particular cure was inſcribed. *Pauſanias* writes, " that " in the Temple at *Epidaurus*, there were many columns an- " tiently of this kind, and ſix of them remaining to his time, " inſcribed with the names of men and women, who had been " cured by the God, with an account of their ſeveral caſes, and " the method of their cure: and that there was an old pillar " beſides, which ſtood apart, dedicated to the memory of " *Hippolytus*, who had been raiſed from the dead [2]." *Strabo* alſo, another grave writer, informs us, " that theſe Temples " were conſtantly filled with the ſick, imploring the help of " the God: and that they had tables hanging around them, " in which all the miraculous cures were deſcribed [3]." There is a remarkable fragment of one of theſe tables ſtill extant, and

Pausanias

ſtrabo.

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[1] Ἵνα δὲ ϗ δῶ, Ἰατρικόν τινα Δαίμονα θεραπεύειν σώματα, τὸν καλούμενον Ἀσκληπιόν. εἴποιμ᾽ ἂν ϖρὸς τοὺς θαυμάζοντας τὸ τοιοῦτο. &c. Con. Celſ. l. 3. p. 124.

[2] Στῆλαι δ᾽ εἰστήκεσαν ἐντὸς τοῦ ϖεριβόλου, τὸ μὲν ἀρχαῖον ϗ ϖλέονες, ἐπ᾽ ἐμοῦ δὲ ἓξ λοιπαί. &c. Corinth. l. 2. c. XXVII.

[3] Καὶ τὸ ἱερὸν ϖλῆρες ἔχοντος ἀεὶ τῶν τε καμνόντων, ϗ τῶν ἀνακειμένων πινάκων, ἐν οἷς ἀναγεγραμμένω τυγχάνουσι αἱ θεραπεῖαι. Strab. l. 8. p. 575. Edit. Amſtel.

exhibited by *Gruter* in his collection, as it was found in the ruins of *Æſculapius*'s Temple, *in the iſland of the* Tyber, in *Rome*; which gives an account *of two blind men reſtored* to *ſight by* Æſculapius, *in the open view, and with the loud acclamations of the people, acknowledging the manifeſt power of the God.* Upon which the learned *Montfaucon* makes this reflection, that *in this are ſeen, either the wiles of the Devil, or the tricks of Pagan Prieſts, ſuborning men to counterfeit diſeaſes and miraculous cures* [1].

Now tho' nothing can ſupport the belief and credit of miracles more authentically, than publick monuments, erected in proof and memory of them, at the time when they were performed; yet in defiance of that authority, it is certain, that all thoſe heathen miracles were pure forgeries contrived to delude the credulous multitude. And in truth; this particular claim of *curing diſeaſes miraculouſly*, affords great room for ſuch a deluſion, and a wide field for the exerciſe of craft. Every man's experience has taught him, that diſeaſes thought fatal and deſperate, are often ſurprizingly healed of themſelves, by ſome ſecret and ſudden effort of nature, impenetrable to the ſkill of man: but to aſcribe this preſently to a miracle, as weak and ſuperſtitious minds are apt to do; to the prayers of the living, or the interceſſions of the dead; is what neither ſound reaſon, nor true religon will juſtify. Wherefore when the narratives of theſe pretended cures are delivered to us by partial and intereſted, or by weak and credulous men, they will always furniſh reaſon to ſuſpect, that the relators were either deluded themſelves, or willing to delude others: and unleſs we know more preciſely in this caſe the real bounds between nature and miracle, we cannot pay any great regard to ſuch ſtories; eſpecially when we are informed at the ſame time by the Chriſtians themſelves, that the ſame cures were performed alſo by Knaves and Impoſtors, of all ſects and nations; by *Heathens*, *Jews*, and *Heretics*; which according to the principles of thoſe days, were aſcribed either to the power of *Dæmons*, or to the magical force of amulets and charms.

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[1] See Montfauc. Antiqu. Tom. 2. par. 1. l. 4. c. 6. it. Gruter. Inſcr. p. LXXI.

Sect. 3. But the moſt eminent and celebrated of all the miraculous powers of the primitive Church was, the gift *of caſting out Devils*, or the cure of *Dæmoniacs*. To this the antient Fathers and Apologiſts make the moſt frequent appeals; and on this they lay the greateſt ſtreſs, towards evincing the divinity of the Chriſtian Religion. It is not eaſy however to collect from their accounts, what was the real caſe of theſe *Dæmoniacs*, and the proper nature of their malady. The Fathers indeed themſelves ſeem to have been fully perſuaded, and labor to perſuade every body elſe, that they were actually poſſeſſed and tormented by Devils, or evil Spirits: yet many learned men of modern times have imagined them rather to have been affected by the *Epilepſy*, or *falling ſickneſs*. Mr. *Dodwell* himſelf takes their caſe to have been of this kind, and curable *by the ordinary way of medicine*, as well as the extraordinary one of miracle [1]. And it is certain, that the effects conſtantly aſcribed to it, ſeem to be nothing elſe but the ordinary ſymptoms of an *Epilepſy*, as they are deſcribed by the Phyſicians. *Juſtin* ſpeaks of them *as being thrown down always to the ground, by the Devils who poſſeſſed them* [2]. And *Chryſoſtom*,

Exorcisms.

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[1] Morbum itaque caducum, quem Comitialem ſeu Regium appellant, curabant paſſim exorciſmis ſuis coævi *Tertulliano* Chriſtiani. Nec enim ego alium cenſuerim, quo laborarint *Dæmoniaci illi a Dæmone præcipitati*.——Nihil enim impedit, quo minus iidem per medicinam poſſint etiam curari—Diſſert. in Iren. 2. § XLVII. p. 175.

[2] Καὶ οἱ ψυχαῖς ἀποθανόντων λαμβανόμενοι ϗ ῥιπτόμενοι ἄνθρωποι, οὓς δαιμονολήπτους ϗ μαινομένους καλοῦσι πάντες. Apol. 1. p. 28.

in his elaborate conſolation to *Stagirius*, who was alſo poſſeſſed, recites all the particulars of his caſe, as they were related to him by a common friend; *the convulſion of his hands, the diſtortion of his eyes, the foam of his mouth, his horrid and inarticulate voice, the tremor of his body, and the long privation of his ſenſes* [1]. *St. Gregory* of *Nyſſa*, ſpeaking of a woman alſo in the ſame caſe, ſays, *that groaning with a terrible and inarticulate voice, different from human, ſhe fell flat on the ground, tearing her hair, her eyes diſtorted, her mouth foaming: nor did the Devil deſiſt from ſtrangling her*, &c. [2] Then as to what theſe Fathers declare, concerning their power of *laſhing, burning and tormenting* the Devils; and of their *groaning and howling* under the torture of the Chriſtian exorciſm, ſuch an imagination might eaſily be conceived, from the ſtrange convulſions of the body, and the hollow ſighs and groans which commonly attend ſuch fits. And the other circumſtances likewiſe, ſo conſtantly atteſted by them all, concerning *the ſpeeches and confeſſions of the Devils; their anſwering to all quæſtions; owning themſelves to be wicked ſpirits; telling whence they came, and whither they were going, and pleading for favor and eaſe from the hands of the Exorciſts*, may not improbably be accounted for, either by the diſordered ſtate of the patient, anſwering wildly and at random to any quæſtions propoſed, or by the arts of impoſture and contrivance between the Parties concerned in the act.

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[1] Τὴν στρέβλωσιν τῶν χειρῶν, τὴν διαστροφὴν τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν, τὸν ἀπὸ τοῦ στόματος ἀφρὸν, &c. Tom. 1. p. 156. E. Edit. Benedict.

Ita etiam *Plinius*, corruens morbo comitiali. [Hiſt. N. 28. 6.] atque ita quoque S. Cyprianus—irrepentes in corporibus occulte, mentes terrent, membra diſtorquent, valetudinem frangunt, &c. De Idolor. Van. p. 206.

[2] Πνεύματι δαιμονίῳ στρεβλωθεῖσα, καὶ βρυχηθμῷ θηριώδει παρὰ τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην φωνὴν ἀνοιμώξασα, πίπτει πρηνὴς, &c. in Vit. Greg. Thaumat. p. 973. B. Oper. Edit. Pariſ.

This, I dare ſay, will appear probable to every impartial reader, who, from the credulous and enthuſiaſtic diſpoſition of theſe Fathers, and their preconceived and erroneous notions about the origin and power of Dæmons, will be apt to conclude, that they were either induced by their prejudices, to give too haſty a credit to theſe pretended Poſſeſſions; or carried away by their zeal, to aſſiſt even in ſupporting a deluſion, which was uſeful to the Chriſtian cauſe. And tho' this may ſound harſh in the ears of many, it will not appear ſtrange to thoſe, who have given any attention to the hiſtory of mankind; which will always ſuggeſt this ſad reflection; that the greateſt zealots in religion; or the leaders of ſects and parties, whatever purity or principles they pretend to, have ſeldom ſcrupled to make uſe of a commodious lie, for the advancement, of what they call the truth. And with regard to theſe very Fathers, there is not one of them, as an eminent writer of eccleſiaſtical hiſtory declares, who made any ſcruple in thoſe ages, of uſing *the hyperbolical ſtyle*, to advance the honor of God, and the ſalvation of men [1]. For it is certain, that the greateſt part of the wonderfull things, which they relate, are in themſelves utterly incredible; and ſuch of them as happen to be the moſt diſtinctly deſcribed, carry always the greateſt marks of art and contrivance, for the ſake of ſerving ſome particular purpoſe. For example, *Tertullian*, who was an utter enemy to plays and public ſhews in the Theaters, wrote a book, to deter all Chriſtians from frequenting them, in which he tells the following ſtory: " An example happened, ſays he, as the Lord is wit-" neſs, of a woman, who went to the Theater, and came " back with a Devil in her: whereupon when the unclean

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[1] In honorem Dei, ſalutemque hominum, hyperbolica oratione uti, nemo tunc temporis religioni ducebat. Jo. Cleric. Hiſt. Eccleſ. p. 681.

" ſpirit was urged and threatened in the office of exorciſing, " for having dared to attack one of the faithfull; *I have done* " *nothing*, replied he, *but what is very fair, for I found her on* " *my own ground.*" He adds a ſecond ſtory ſtill more dreadfull, " of another woman, who, in the very night, after ſhe had " ſeen a tragedy in the Theater, had her winding-ſheet ſhewn " to her in a viſion, in which ſhe was reproached by name, " with the Tragedian, whom ſhe had been ſeeing, and did " not live above five days after [1]."

Now in this laſt caſe, it is not improbable, that a poor weak woman, who went to ſleep, under the conſciouſneſs of a grievous ſin committed by her, might, by the terrors of a dream, be thrown into a diſorder, that put an end to her life. But in the firſt, tho' God himſelf is appealed to, for the truth of it, yet when we reflect on the principles of thoſe times, and the particular warmth of *Tertullian*'s zeal, we cannot but ſuſpect, that the ſmart anſwer of the Devil, was contrived to enforce, what he was ſo warmly inculcating, the horrible ſin and dangerous conſequence of frequenting the public Theaters.

It is very remarkable, that all the Fathers, who lay ſo great a ſtreſs on this particular gift of caſting out Devils, yet allow the ſame power both to the *Jews* and the Gentiles, as well before, as after our Saviour's coming. *Juſtin Martyr*, in his dialogue with *Trypho* the *Jew*, ſays, " that all Devils yield and " ſubmit to the name of *Jeſus*, when they would not, to any " other name of their Kings, Prophets or Patriarchs: yet if " any ſhould exorciſe them in the name of the God of *Abra-* " *ham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob*, they would in like manner ſubmit.

Justin

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[1] Nam & exemplum accidit Domino teſte, ejus mulieris, quæ theatrum adiit, & inde cum Dæmonio rediit. Itaque in exorciſmo, cum oneraretur immundus ſpiritus, quod auſus eſſet fidelem adgredi; conſtanter & juſtiſſime quidem, inquit, feci, in meo eam inveni, &c.—De Spectac. 26.

" For your Exorciſts, adds he, as well as the Gentiles, uſe " this art in exorciſing, together with certain fumes, and ligatures [1]." And the *Jews,* ſays *Irenæus,* even now, by this ſame invocation of the name of God, drive away Devils [2].

Origen.

Origen, in his diſpute with *Celſus,* aſſerting the deſcent of the *Jews* from *Abraham, Iſaac,* and *Jacob,* ſays, " that theſe " names joined to that of God, have ſuch power, that not " onely their own nation uſe them in their prayers, and " in caſting out Devils, but all other Inchanters and Magicians whatſoever: and that in magical books, the ſame " invocation and uſe of God's name is often found, as peculiar to the art, and effectual againſt Devils [3]." And ſpeaking of *Abraham*'s great merit, he obſerves, " that it is " not *Moſes* onely, who celebrates it, but that many of thoſe, " who charm or drive out Devils, call upon the God of *Abraham,* without knowing even who *Abraham* was [4]." Again, " if a man, ſays he, invoke or exorciſe by the name of the " God of *Abraham, Iſaac,* and *Jacob,* the Devils will obey, " and do what they are commanded; but if he tranſlate thoſe " names, according to their meaning, into any other language, they will have no force at all. The ſame, adds he, " is true of the word, *Sabaoth,* ſo much uſed in incantations: " if it be applied in it's original *Hebrew,* it is effectual: but " if tranſlated into another tongue, ſo as to put for it, *the*

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[1] Ἤδη μέντοι οἱ ἐξ ὑμῶν ἐπορκισταὶ τῇ τέχνῃ ὥσπερ ϗ τὰ ἔθνη χρώμενοι ἐξορκίζουσι, ϗ θυμιάμασι ϗ καταδέσμοις χρῶνται. Dial. par. 2. p. 321.

[2] Et propter hoc Judæi uſque nunc hac ipſa adfatione Dæmonas effugant.—l. 2. c. 5. p. 123.

[3] Ὧν τοσοῦτον δύναται τὰ ὀνόματα συναπτόμενα τῇ τοῦ θεοῦ προσηγορίᾳ, ὡς οὐ μόνον τοὺς ἀπὸ τοῦ ἔθνους χρῆσθαι ἐν ταῖς πρὸς θεὸν εὐχαῖς, ϗ ἐν τῷ κατεπᾴδειν δαίμονας, &c. Con. Celſ. l. 4. p. 183, 84.

[4] Διὸ παραλαμβάνους τὴν, θεὸς Ἀβραὰμ, λέξιν, οὐκ ἐπιστάμενοι δὲ τίς ἐστιν ὁ Ἀβραάμ. ib. l. 1. p. 17.

" *Lord of Hoſts*, it avails nothing, if we believe the ſkillfull " in theſe matters [1]."

Joſephus.

Joſephus writes, " that *Solomon* was particularly inſtructed by " God in the art of caſting out Devils, for the benefit of man- " kind; and that he left behind him a receit of thoſe charms " and exorciſms, by which he uſed to drive them out: which " ſame method was the moſt effectual even to his time. For " I ſaw, ſays he, one of my countrymen, *Eleazar*, caſting " out Devils, in the preſence of *Veſpaſian*, his ſons and offi- " cers, and a multitude of ſoldiers. His method was this: " he applied to the noſe of a perſon poſſeſſed, a ring, which " had a certain drug or root under the ſeal of it, which *Solomon* " had preſcribed; and ſo, by the ſmell of the ring, he drew " out the Devil, through the noſtrils of the patient; who fell " preſently to the ground; upon which, he adjured the Devil " never to return, rehearſing the name of *Solomon*, with cer- " tain charms, which he had compoſed and left behind him; " and being deſirous to convince the company, that he was really " indued with this power, to which he pretended, he placed " a certain cup or veſſel filled with water, at a little diſtance " from the perſon poſſeſſed, and commanded the Devil, as " he was going out of him, to overturn the cup, ſo as to give " the ſpectators a manifeſt proof, that he had quitted the

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[1] Τὸ δὲ ὅμοιον ἐροῦμεν καὶ περὶ τῆς Σαβαὼθ φωνῆς πολλαχοῦ τῶν ἐπῳδῶν παραλαμβανομένης. ὅτι εἰ μεταλαμβάνομεν τὸ ὄνομα εἰς τὸ, κύριος τῶν δυνάμεων.—οὐδὲν ποιήσομεν, ib. l. 5. p. 262.

N. B. From what is here ſaid by *Origen*, and the other Fathers, it appears; that the power of caſting out Devils, was conſidered as a peculiar gift, or art rather, grounded on certain rules, which were taught and delivered in books; and was common both to the Jews and the Heathens, as well as to the Chriſtians; and, among them all, was adminiſtered by a particular ſet of men, called *Exorciſts:* who about the time of *Origen*'s death, or the middle of the third Century, began to be reckoned among the inferior orders of the Church: [Vid. Euſeb. l. 6. c. 43.] The form of whoſe ordination is given us by the learned *Bingham:* [Antiqu. lib. 3. c. 4. § 5.]

" body of the man [1]." Which ſhews, in contradiction to what *Juſtin Martyr* affirmed above, that beſides the name of *Jeſus*, the Devils were ſubject likewiſe to that of *Solomon.*

Now it will be granted, I ſuppoſe, by all men of ſenſe, that theſe *Jewiſh* and Gentile Exorciſts were mere Knaves and Impoſtors; who, by their tricks and falſe miracles, contrived to delude the credulous multitude, in order to acquire gain or power to themſelves, and to keep their people firm to the *Jewiſh* or Heatheniſh rites, in oppoſition to the Chriſtian. *Ulpian* the lawyer ſpeaks of *Exorciſm* in general, as a term of art uſed by Impoſtors: by whom he is ſuppoſed by ſome, to mean the *Jewiſh*, by others, the *Chriſtian Exorciſts* [2]. But *Tertullian*, and all the Fathers in general declare, that theſe Magicians and wandering Jugglers performed many wonderfull things, above the force of human power, which they wholly aſcribe to the aſſiſtance of Dæmons. And if they were ſo far deluded by thoſe *Jewiſh* and Gentile pretenders, as to take ſuch ſenſeleſs charms, and tricks of legerdemain, for the effects of a ſupernatural power, their prejudices would operate much more ſtrongly in favor of their own Impoſtors, who had taken up the ſame trade: or if they ſaw through the cheat of the Gentile practitioners, yet on account of the credit, which they had gained with the people, and the difficulty of detecting the fraud, they might think it convenient perhaps, to oppoſe one cheat to another, and ſet up rival powers of their own, in oppoſition to thoſe of their adverſaries, in hopes of beating them at their own weapons.

For it is very hard to believe, what *Origen* declares above, that the Devils, for the ſake of doing the greater miſchief to

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[1] Καὶ αὐτὴ μέχρι νῦν παρ' ἡμῖν ἡ θεραπεία πλεῖστον ἰσχύει. ἱστόρησα γάρ τινα Ἐλεάζαρον, &c. Antiq. Jud. l. VIII. c. 2. § 5.

[2] Bingham, Antiqu. B. 5. c. 4. § 3.

men,

Jeroms

Camel.

men, *uſed to poſſeſs and deſtroy their cattel.* In confirmation of which, St. *Jerom* has related a moſt ridiculous ſtory, in his life of St. *Hilarion* the Monk: where after a narrative of many caſes of Devils, expelled by that ſaint from the bodies of men, he adds, “ but it is to little purpoſe to talk of men; brute “ animals alſo were dayly brought to him, mad or poſſeſſed: “ among the reſt, a *Bactrian Camel,* of an enormous ſize, “ which had already deſtroyed many people: above thirty men “ were employed to drag him along with the ſtrongeſt ropes. “ His eyes were bloody; his mouth foaming; his tongue roll- “ ing and ſwoln; and his ſtrange roaring above all terrors: “ the old man ordered it to be let looſe: upon which all, who “ were about him, ran away immediately: the ſaint came for- “ ward alone, and in the *Syriac* tongue, ſaid, *thou doſt not* “ *affright me, Devil, with all that bulk of body: thou art one and* “ *the ſame in a little fox, or in a camel:* and ſo he ſtood firm “ with his arm ſtretched out; and as the beaſt advanced “ towards him, furious and ready to devour him, it preſently “ fell down with it's head to the ground; ſo that all preſent “ were amazed at the ſudden change, from ſo great a fierce- “ neſs, to ſuch a tameneſs. Upon which the old man took “ occaſion to teach them, that the Devil uſed to ſeize cattel, “ out of his hatred to men, to whom he bore ſo great a “ grudge, as to wiſh, not onely that they, but that all which “ they had, might periſh.” To this ſtory I cannot forbear adding, what is likewiſe affirmed by the ſame *Jerom,* of the ſame *Hilarion*; that *he was ſo full of the power of the Holy Spirit, as to be able to diſcover, from the ſmell of the bodies and the cloaths of men, or of any thing elſe, which they had but touched, to what particular Dæmon, or to what vice they were ſeverally ſubject.* Now tho' this good Father invokes *the aſſiſtance of the Holy Spi-*

rit, *in his attempt to deſcribe a life ſo wonderful*; yet all, who read it, muſt needs be perſuaded, that out of his zeal and warm affection to the Monkiſh Order, which he profeſſed, and from a deſire to advance it's credit in the world, he either wholly invented, or at leaſt willfully propagated all theſe extravagant tales, which he himſelf could not poſſibly believe: "The time, ſays he, would fail me, if I ſhould attempt to relate all the wonderfull works, that were performed by him—wherefore by the influence of his Example, *innumerable Monaſteries began to be founded through all Palæſtine*; and all the Monks ran eagerly to *Hilarion*, &c. [1]." This was the real purpoſe of St. *Jerom*'s zeal; this the fruit of his fictitious miracles. But to return to the *Dæmoniacs*. Since this gift of caſting out Devils is what the Fathers, as I have ſaid above, lay the greateſt ſtreſs upon, and to which they make the moſt frequent appeals, it may be proper to ſtrengthen what I have already been declaring upon it, by a few particular obſervations, which I would recommend to the attention of the reader.

1ſt, That there is ſuch an uniformity in all the primitive accounts of them, tho' given by different Fathers and in different ages, *of the Devils being ſcourged, burned, and tortured by the Chriſtian Exorciſts; and of their howlings, diſcourſes and confeſſions*, that they all ſeem to have been caſt in the ſame mould; and to have been the copies rather of one original ſtory, tranſcribed by the later writers from the earlier, than the natural deſcriptions, of what each of them had ſeverally ſeen, at different times, and in diſtant places [2]. Observations 1

2dly,

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[1] Vid. Oper. Tom. 4. par. 2. p. 82, 83, &c.

Tempus me deficiet, ſi voluero univerſa ſigna, quæ ab eo perpetrata ſunt, dicere. —Exemplo itaque ejus innumerabilia Monaſteria per totum Palæſtinam eſſe cœperunt, & ad eum omnes Monachi certatim currere, &c.

[2] See what I have collected above on this ſubject, from *Tertullian, Minucius Felix, Cyprian* and *Lactantius*. Thus Mr. *Whiſton* alſo obſerves, *that a good deal of*

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2dly, That the perſons thus poſſeſſed, and in whom the Devils uſed to hold diſcourſes, were called by the primitive Chriſtians, Ἐγγαστριμύθοι or *Ventriloquiſts*; becauſe they were believed *to ſpeak out of the belly, through the navel* [1] Thus in a book aſcribed to *Juſtin Martyr*, containing a number of Quæſtions, with anſwers to them, for the uſe of the *Orthodox*, one of the Quæſtions is this; "if all the arts of deluſion are "aboliſhed by the coming of Chriſt, how comes it to paſs, "that Dæmons ſtill ſpeak by thoſe, who are called *Ventrilo*-"*quiſts*, and that they do not make Chriſtianity ridiculous and "contemptible, by ſhewing forth the works of impoſture, "and uttering oracular prædictions in the bodies of Chriſ-"tians [2]?"

Ventriloquists.

Now many of us have ſeen, and may ſtill ſee perhaps at this day, a ſort of theſe *Ventriloquiſts*, who by a particular formation of their organs, managed by art and practice, could ſpeak in ſuch a manner, as to perſuade the company, that the voice did not proceed from them, but from ſome inviſible being: which they could direct likewiſe ſo, as to make it ſeem to come, from what part of the room they pleaſed: by which means, weak and ignorant people have been terrified almoſt out of their ſenſes, believing it, to be the *voice of a Spirit or Dæmon*. If we ſuppoſe then, that there were any Artiſts of this kind among thoſe ancient Chriſtians, as there undoubtedly were among the ancient Gentiles, it is eaſy to imagine, what ſtrange and ſurprizing feats might be performed, by a correſpondence between the *Ventriloquiſt* and the *Exorciſt*, ſo as to delude the moſt ſenſible and ſagacious of their audience, pre-

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what is ſaid upon it by Minucius Felix, *is made uſe of by* Cyprian, *ſoon after his time, and that almoſt verbatim.* Account of the *Dæmoniacs*, p. 42.

[1] See Bing. Antiqu. l. 16. c. 5. § 4.

[2] Vid. Quæſt. & Reſponſ. ad Orthodox. Quæſt. 8.

poſſeſſed with the belief of theſe diabolical poſſeſſions, and void of all ſuſpicion, that ſuch effects could poſſibly be produced by any human art or natural cauſe.

3*dly*, From the teſtimony of Antiquity itſelf it is evident, that many of their Dæmoniacs could not poſſibly be cured by all the power of the Exorciſts; and that the cures, which are pretended to have been wrought on any, were but temporary, and appear to have been the ceſſation rather of a particular fit, or acceſs of the diſtemper, than the real expulſion of a Dæmon. This may be clearly collected from the method of treating them in the primitive Church, as it was regulated by ſeveral Canons and rules, made for that purpoſe by Biſhops and Councils, injoining: "that they ſhould not be received to baptiſm, but "in the intervals of their diſorder; nor to the Communion, "unleſs they ſhewed ſigns of piety and ſobriety, ſo as not to "expoſe and blaſpheme the myſteries; in which caſe they "might communicate now and then: that they ſhould never "be ordained or taken into any order of the Clergy; nor "allowed to pray in common with the congregation; but be "produced always ſeparately, and commanded onely to bow "down their heads, while the reſt of the aſſembly were offer-"ing up a prayer for them." In different Churches however, a different diſcipline was obſerved with regard to them; for in ſome, they were admitted to baptiſm, and even to dayly communion; by which means many are affirmed to have been relieved, when all the arts of the Exorciſts had been tried upon them in vain [1]. Now theſe caſes manifeſtly ſhew, that this celebrated gift, as it was managed by the primitive Church, was not able to work an abſolute cure; or to drive out the 3.

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[1] See Bing. Antiquit. book xi. c. v. ib. xvii. c. v. § iii, &c.
§ iii. it. ibid. book xv. c. iv. § xvi. it.

Devils ſo effectually, as to reduce the patients to a permanent ſtate of ſanity: ſo as to render them ordinarily capable, either of baptiſm, or the Euchariſt, or of joining even with the congregation, in the dayly prayers of the Church. Whence we may reaſonably conclude; that it was nothing elſe, but a falſe mimickry of that genuin power, which was exerciſed by our Lord, and conferred afterwards on his Apoſtles: a power which never did it's work by halves, or left it's cures imperfect. For, as we learn from the Goſpel, *Mary Magdalen*, from whom *ſeven Devils* were caſt out, continued ever after in her ſober ſenſes; accompanying and miniſtring on all occaſions to our Lord, to the time of his death: and the man alſo, out of whom a *Legion* of them was ejected, was reſtored at once to perfect health both of mind and body, and ſent away to proclame in *Decapolis*, and the neighbouring country, the miraculous cure which *Jeſus* had wrought upon him [1].

4. *4thly*, There is another circumſtance belonging to theſe primitive Dæmoniacs, of which the reader perhaps may deſire ſome farther explication; I mean the great numbers of them, which appear to have ſubſiſted in thoſe early ages: whoſe chief habitation was within a part of the Church, allotted to them for that purpoſe; in which, as in a kind of Hoſpital, they were committed to the care of the Exorciſts: whoſe buſineſs it was, "to pray over them on ſome occaſions, and to provide "their dayly food, and keep them employed in ſome bodily "exerciſe and innocent buſineſs, of ſweeping the Church and "the like, to prevent the more violent agitations of Satan, "and leſt he ſhould be tempted by their idleneſs to renew his "attacks upon them [2]." Which method of relieving ſo

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[1] Luke viii. 2. Matt. v. 20. Luke viii. 39.

[2] Bing. book III. c. iv. § VII.

miſerable a tribe of helpleſs mortals, will account for the numbers, with which the Churches were ſtored; as well as for the confidence of thoſe challenges, made to the Heathens, by the Chriſtian Apologiſts, to come and ſee at any hour, and any warning, how they could *torment, and laſh, and burn, and drive the evil ſpirits* out of them; while they kept ſuch numbers of them in conſtant pay, always ready for the ſhew; tried and diſciplined by their Exorciſts, to an habit of groaning and howling, and to give proper anſwers to all quæſtions, which ſhould be demanded of them.

It is obſervable alſo in the laſt place, that this power of *exorciſing Dæmoniacs or caſting out Devils*, which had hitherto been in the hands onely of the meaner ſort of the Chriſtian layety, was put under the direction of the Clergy, by the *Council of Laodicea*, about the year of Chriſt three hundred and ſixty ſeven, in which it was decreed, that *none ſhould be Exorciſts, but thoſe, who were appointed by the Biſhop*. After which appropriation of it, as Mr. *Whiſton* informs us, "few or none "of the Clergy, nor indeed of the Layety, were any longer "able to caſt out Devils: ſo that the old Chriſtian exorciſm "or prayer for the *Energumens* in the Church, began ſoon "after to be omitted as wholly uſeleſs [1]." Which ſudden failure of ſo eminent a gift ſeems to be aſcribed by him to that fatal ſtep of this *unhappy Council*, as he calls it; as if, by their preſumptuous attempt to controul the divine power, they had provoked God to withdraw it. But tho' this ſolution of the caſe may be agreeable to the character and principles of that very learned and pious writer; yet it is more agreeable to reaſon and the experience of mankind, to ſuppoſe, that the licentious abuſe of this imaginary power, by the many falſe and

C. of Laodicea 367.

Whiston.

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[1] See Mr. *Whiſton*'s Account of *Dæmoniacs*, p. 53.

impudent pretenſions, of crafty impoſtors on the one hand, and wrong-headed Enthuſiaſts on the other, had brought ſuch ſcandal on Chriſtianity itſelf, that the Clergy were forced at laſt to interpoſe, and take the affair into their own hands. For that this was really the caſe, is manifeſtly ſhewn by the event: ſince the exerciſe of this gift was no ſooner ſubjected to any regulation, even by thoſe, who favored and deſired to ſupport it, than it graduallly decreaſed and expired.

Visions Trances

§ 4. The next miraculous gift aſcribed to the primitive Church, is that of *Prophetic viſions, and extatic trances, and the diſcovery of men's hearts:* for theſe ſeem to be the fruit of one and the ſame ſpirit: which exerted itſelf chiefly about the end of the ſecond and the beginning of the third century, through *Tertullian*'s and *Cyprian*'s days. "The divine cenſure, ſays "*Cyprian,* does not ceaſe to chaſtiſe us, neither by night, nor "by day, for beſides nightly viſions, even boys among us are "filled with the Holy Ghoſt, and in fits of ecſtaſy, ſee, hear, "and utter things, by which the Lord thinks fit to admoniſh "and inſtruct us [1]." This ecſtaſy was a temporary madneſs or loſs of ſenſes, and is called by *Tertullian, the ſpiritual virtue, in which prophecy conſiſts* [2]. *Suidas* ſays, that of all the kinds of fury or madneſs, that of the Poets and Prophets was alone to be wiſhed for [3].

Mr. *Dodwell* obſerves, "that viſions were peculiar to the "young, dreams to the old: becauſe it required a great

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[1] Caſtigare nos itaque divina cenſura nec noctibus deſinit nec diebus. Præter nocturnas enim viſiones, per dies quoque impletur apud nos Spiritu ſancto puerorum innocens ætas, quæ in extaſi videt & audit & loquitur ea, quibus nos Dominus monere & inſtruere dignatur. Epiſt. ad Cler. ix. p. 22. Ed. Nic. Rigalt.

[2] Quum in illum Deus amentiam immiſit, ſpiritalem vim, qua conſtat prophetia. De Anim. c. 21. it. 24.

[3] Τῶν μανιῶν—αἱ δὲ αἱρεταὶ ϗ εὐχῆς ἄξιαι, οἷαι τῶν ποιητῶν, ϗ τῶν χρησμολόγων. in voce Μανίαι.

" ſtrength of body to ſupport the violence of ſuch divine agi- " tations [1]." *Philo*, the Jew, treating of the ſame ecſtaſies, with which the Patriarchs and Prophets of the Old Teſtament uſed to be affected, reaſons thus, " the human mind, ſays he, " is ſymbolically called the Sun by *Moſes*—while our mind " therefore ſhines, and exerts itſelf within us, ſpreading as it " were a meridian light through the Soul, we are then in our " right ſenſes, without any divine influx: but when the mind " goes down, then a divine ecſtaſy and prophetic madneſs fall " upon us: for when the divine light ſhines, the human ſets: " and when that ſets, this again riſes; and this is what uſu- " ally happens to the prophetic race: for the mind is driven " out of us, when the divine ſpirit comes in; and when this " again quits us, the other returns: for it is not fit, that mor- " tal ſhould cohabit with immortal [2]."

Philo.

From theſe teſtimonies we may collect, that the Prophecy of the Primitive Church by *viſion* or *ecſtaſy*, was of the ſame kind, as to it's outward appearance, with *that divination by fury*, as it was called among the Gentiles, which was practiſed by the *Delphic Pythia*, and *Cumæan Sibyl*, when agitated by the pretended power and inſtinct of the God [3]. Of which *Cicero* ſays, in way of raillery; " what authority can that madneſs

Pythia. Sibyl.

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[1] Plane ſenibus ita *ſomnia* aptantur, ut Juvenibus *Viſiones*. Vehemens nimirum illa humorum agitatio non erat niſi in ætatis vigore toleranda. &c. Vid. Diſſert. Cyprian. IV. § 40.

[2] Ἥλιον δὲ διὰ συμβόλου τὸν ἡμέτερον νοῦν καλεῖ——ὅτε μὲν γὰρ φῶς ἐπιλάμψει τὸ θεῖον, δύεται τὸ ἀνθρώπινον, ὅτε δ᾽ ἐκεῖνο δύει, τοῦτ᾽ ἀνίσχει καὶ ἀνατέλλει. τῷ δὲ προφητικῷ γένει φιλεῖ τοῦτο συμβαίνειν.——θέμις γὰρ οὐκ ἔστι, θνητὸν ἀθανάτω συνοικῆσαι. &c. Philo. Quis. Divinor. Hær. Oper. Tom. I p. 511. Edit. Lond. 1742.

[3] Ineſt igitur inanimis præſagitio—ea ſi exarſit acrius, furor appellatur, quum a corpore animus abſtractus divino inſtinctu concitatur. Cic. de Div. I. 31.

—————————ea fræna furenti
Concutit, & ſtimulos ſub pectore vertit
Apollo.
Ut primum ceſſit furor, & rabida ora
quierunt. Virg. Æn. 6. 102.

" have, which you call divine; that a wiſe man ſhould not be " able to foreſee, what a madman can; and that he, who has " loſt all human ſenſes, ſhould preſently acquire divine ones [1].

Montanus.

Montanus the Heretic, and his female Aſſociates, ſeem to have been the Authors of theſe prophetic trances, towards the end of the ſecond century; and acquired great credit by their *viſions and ecſtaſies*, in which they acted their part ſo well, by feigned diſtortions and convulſive agitations of the body, as to appear to be out of their ſenſes; and in thoſe fits, uttered many wild prophecies and prædictions, which they impoſed upon the people for divine revelations; and by affecting at the ſame time a peculiar ſanctity and ſeverity of diſcipline, gathered a great number of diſciples [2], who firſt raiſed and propagated that ſpirit of enthuſiaſm in the Church, which ſubſiſted in it for near a century, under the title of *viſion and prophecy*, and then gradually ſunk into utter contempt.

Tertullian

Tertullian, a writer of this enthuſiaſtic turn, ſevere in his manners, and ſtiff in his opinions, wrote with great vehemence againſt Plays and Shews: in which, as we have ſeen above, he made great uſe of viſions, towards enforcing his argument. He wrote another book to prove, *that it was a Sin, for a Soldier, to wear a garland or crown on any occaſion, and that a Chriſtian ſhould rather ſuffer martyrdom than ſubmit to it* [3]: and in a third book, he affirms it to be rank idolatry, *to deck their doors with garlands or flowers, on Feſtival days, according to the cuſtom of the Heathens:* " and calls the name of God to witneſs, that

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[1] Quid vero auctoritatis habet furor iſte, quem divinum vocatis, ut quæ ſapiens non videat, ea videat inſanus; & is, qui humanos ſenſus amiſerit divinos adſecutus ſit? De Div. 2. 54.

[2] Vid. Cave Hiſt. litt. Vol. 1. p. 74. it. Jo. Cleric. Hiſt. Eccleſ. ad Ann. CLVII.

[3] Vid. lib. de Corona.

“ he knew a perſon, who had been grievouſly chaſtiſed in a “ viſion, becauſe his ſervants, even without his knowledge and “ in his abſence, had crowned the door with flowers, on ſome “ occaſion of public joy [1].” He wrote a treatiſe likewiſe, to prove the ſoul of man to be *corporeal and of human ſhape:* and for the truth of his opinion, appeals to his ecſtatic maid above-mentioned, of whom he tells this ſtory: that, “ as he hap-“ pened to be diſcourſing on the nature of the ſoul, ſhe fell “ into one of her trances: and as ſoon as the ſervice was over, “ and the people diſmiſſed, ſhe came, as uſual, to relate to “ him, what ſhe had ſeen; which was always carefully taken “ down in writing, in order to be examined: when ſhe “ declared, that there was ſhewn to her among other things, “ an human ſoul in bodily form; yet ſo, as to appear to be a “ ſpirit: not of a void and empty quality, but what might “ even be handled, tender and lucid, of an airy color, and “ in all points of human ſhape [2].” Which wild dream of a frantic, or fiction rather of a ſilly woman, this Father applies, as the teſtimony of God himſelf, to evince the certainty of his opinion. Laſtly, in another book, written to prove, that women ought always *to wear a veil,* he declares, *that God, in a viſion to a certain ſiſter, had preſcribed to her, by a ſpecial revelation, the exact length and meaſure of the veil* [3].

Now it is eaſy to imagine, how *Tertullian* might be impoſed upon by the craft of theſe extatic viſionaries; and by the

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[1] Ex auctoritate quoque Dei conteſſtor——ſcio fratrem per viſionem eadem nocte caſtigatum graviter, quod januam ejus ſubito annuntiatis gaudiis publicis ſervi coronaſſent. &c. De Idolat. 15.

[2] Forte neſcio quid de anima diſſerebamus, cum ea ſoror in Spiritu eſſet. Poſt tranſacta ſolennia, dimiſſa plebe—inter cetera, inquit, oſtenſa eſt mihi anima corporaliter, &c. Hoc viſio, & Deus teſtis, & Apoſtolus Chariſmatum in Eccleſia futurorum Sponſor.—De Anima. c. 9.

[3] Nobis Dominus etiam revelationibus, velaminis ſpatia metatus eſt. Nam cuidam Sorori noſtræ Angelus in Somnis. &c. De Virgin. Veland. 17.

Cyprian.

warmth of his temper and force of his prejudices, be drawn to eſpouſe any deluſion, that flattered his particular zeal and favorite opinions. But it is difficult to account for the ſame conduct in his ſcholar *Cyprian*; a man of a more acute head, and ſober mind; but fond of power and Epiſcopal Authority; whoſe character would tempt us to ſuſpect, that he was the inventor, rather than the believer of ſuch idle ſtories; and the director, rather than the dupe of ſenſeleſs viſionaries. Yet in all quæſtionable points of doctrine or diſcipline, which he had a mind to introduce into the Chriſtian worſhip, we find him conſtantly appealing to the teſtimony of *heavenly viſions and divine revelations. It is certain,* ſays Mr. *Dodwell, that all things of great moment, which related to the public ſtate of the Church, were foretold to him in viſions* [1]. For inſtance; in a letter to *Cæcilius*, he declares, that he had received a divine admonition, *to mix water with wine in the Sacrament of the Euchariſt, in order to render it effectual* [2]. In another to the Clergy, concerning certain Prieſts, who had reſtored ſome lapſed Chriſtians too haſtily to the Communion of the Church; he threatens them, to execute, *what he was ordered to do againſt them, in a viſion, if they did not deſiſt* [3]. He makes the ſame threat to one *Pupianus*, who had ſpoken ill of him, and withdrawn himſelf from his communion [1]: where his Editor *Rigaltius* makes this remark, "that the argument of viſions and divine revelations, which *Cyprian* ſo frequently uſes, is a weapon of great force in the hands of ſo good a man, otherwiſe a vain and contemptible one; ſince crafty Sophiſts might eaſily invent ſuch viſions, in favor of any cauſe, to delude the ſimple and unwary [2].

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[1] Adeo familiares *Cypriano* erant hujuſmodi viſiones, ut diſciplinæ etiam Eccleſiaſticæ exercitio illas acceperit, aliaſque deinceps expectaret, &c. Diſſert. Cyprian. IV. § 20.

Ita conſtat gravioris momenti omnia, quæ quidem publicum Eccleſiæ ſtatum attinerent, eſſe iſtiuſmodi viſionibus prædicta. ibid. § 21.

[2] Nec nos putes, frater cariſſime, noſtra & humana conſcribere, aut ultronea voluntate hoc nobis audacter aſſumere.—Sed quando aliquid Deo aſpirante & mandante præcipitur, neceſſe eſt Domino ſervus fidelis obtemperet—admonitos autem nos ſcias, ut calix, qui in commemoratione ejus offertur, mixtus vino offeratur &c. Epiſt. LXIII.

[3] Quoniam ſi ultra in iiſdem perſeveraverint, utar ea admonitione, qua me Dominus uti jubet.—Ep. IX. p. 22.

In a letter likewiſe to the Clergy and the People, *Cyprian* tells them, "how he had been admoniſhed and directed by God, to ordain one *Numidicus* a Prieſt: who by his perſuaſive exhortations had ſent a large number of Martyrs before him to the other world, either ſtoned or burnt to death; and beheld even with joy, the wife of his boſom burnt together with the reſt; being himſelf alſo left for dead, half burnt, and buried in ſtones, till he was found ſcarce alive, and carried off by the piety of his daughter, and ſo reſtored to the world againſt his will. But the Lord had now ſignified the cauſe of it; that he might add him to the Prieſthood of his Church [3]." In another letter he recommends to them one *Celerinus*, whom he had ordained a lecturer: *whoſe modeſty*, he ſays, *had been over-ruled and compelled by a divine viſion, to accept*

Numidicus

Celerinus,

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[1] Epiſt. LXIV. p. 118. Memini enim quid mihi oſtenſum ſit, &c.

[2] Hic etiam *(Cyprianus)* utitur oſtenſionibus & viſionibus; telo, ad conterendos adverſarios, in manu præſertim *Cypriani*, viri optimi atque divini, valentiſſimo; alias vano ac futili. Nam & callidus Rhetor & Sophiſta vaſer hujuſmodi viſa ad cauſam ſuam appoſitiſſima, poterit comminiſci, & fallere incautos & ſimplices. Rigalt. Not. ibid.

[3] Nam admonitos nos & inſtructos ſciatis dignatione divina ut *Numidicus* Preſbyter aſcribatur—qui hortatu ſuo copioſum Martyrum numerum, lapidibus & flammis necatum ante ſe miſit: quique uxorem adhærentem lateri ſuo, concrematam ſimul cum cæteris—lætus aſpexit. Ipſe ſemiuſtulatus & lapidibus obrutus, & pro mortuo derelictus,——remanſit invitus, ſed remanendi, ut videmus, hæc fuit cauſa, ut eum Clero noſtro Dominus adjungeret. Ep. 35.

that office [1]. Where *Rigaltius* once more reflects, *on the great diligence of* Cyprian, *in making ſuch uſe of viſions* [2]. But *Cyprian* himſelf ſuggeſts the reaſon of it, in the Epiſtle immediately preceding, addreſſed likewiſe to the Clergy and the people, concerning one *Aurelius*, whom he had ordained a lecturer, by a *divine admonition*, without calling them together and conſulting with them in common, concerning the character, and merit of the Candidate, as it was the cuſtom of thoſe days in all *Clerical ordinations*; for which he excuſes himſelf by ſaying, that there was no occaſion, in the preſent caſe, *to wait for human teſtimonies, when the divine ſuffrage had already been ſignified* [3]. This then ſeems to be the meaning of *Cyprian's diligence in the uſe of viſions*, that whenever he thought fit to exert his Epiſcopal authority, *without the previous conſent of his Clergy and people*, he might obviate their murmurs by alledging a divine command for it.

Cyprians flight

But the moſt memorable effect of any of his viſions was his flight and retreat, when he withdrew himſelf from his Church, in the time of perſecution. A ſtep which gave great ſcandal, and ſeems to have been conſidered by the Clergy of *Rome*, in a public letter written upon the ſubject of it, to the Clergy of *Carthage*, as a deſertion of his poſt, and paſtoral duty [4]. So that it is no wonder to find *Cyprian* himſelf, as well as his Apologiſt *Pontius*, the writer of his Life, ſo ſollicitous to excuſe it. " There is no doubt, ſays *Rigaltius*, but that the ſeverity of " his maſter *Tertullian*, who wrote a book againſt all flight in

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[1] Referimus ad vos *Celerinum*.—— Clero noſtro non humana ſuffragatione ſed divina dignatione conjunctum, &c. Ep. 34.

[2] Notanda hic etiam eſt induſtria *Cypriani*, viſionum efficacia tam ſuaviter utentis. Not. b. ibid.

[3] In Ordinationibus Clericis, Fratres cariſſimi, ſolemus vos ante conſulere, & mores ac merita ſingulorum communi conſilio ponderare, ſed expectanda non ſunt teſtimonia humana, cum præcedunt divina ſuffragia, &c. Ep. 33.

[4] Vid. Cyprian. Epiſt. 2.

" time of perſecution, raiſed ſuch ſcruples and ſhame in the " mind of *Cyprian,* as made him labour hard to wipe off that " diſgrace; as the pains and perplexity of his Advocate *Pontius* " likewiſe ſhew [1]." They both of them therefore affirm, " that he was commanded to retire, *by a ſpecial revelation from* " *heaven:* and that his flight was not the effect of any other " fear, but that of offending God: and that his mind, wholly " devoted and ſubſervient to the admonitions of God, was per" ſuaded, that, if he had not obeyed the Lord, when he com" manded him to retreat, he ſhould ſin even by ſuffering mar" tyrdom [2]." Yet this plea was nothing elſe without doubt, but a mere fiction, contrived for the purpoſe of quieting the ſcandal, that was raiſed by his flight, and is in effect confuted by himſelf in another letter to the Clergy, in which he declares, " that it was the advice and authority of one *Tertullus,* which " prevailed with him to withdraw himſelf from a place, where " his life was ſo much ſought for: wherefore he deſires them " to perform all the functions of his office for him during his " retreat, ſince their perſons were not expoſed to ſo much envy " and danger as his would be [3]."

Dionyſius,

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[1] Seceſſus iſte Cypriani fugæ probro minime caruit,—nec dubito quin ipſa tanti Magiſtri ſeveritas diſcipuli mentem adeo ſuffuderit, vel aliquo ſaltem ſcrupulo ſic pupugerit, ut fugæ ſuſpicionem Cyprianus abs ſe amoliri magno ſtudio contenderet. Hoc & Pontii familiaris ſui ſatis intricata ſedulitas oſtendit, ipſiuſque Cypriani Epiſtolæ ſequentes declarant. Et ſi verum amamus, haud aliud magis iſta Romani Cleri tam argumentoſa quam incondita commonitio proſcribit. Rigalt. ibid. Not. b.

[2] Et audietis omnia quando ad vos reducem me Dominus fecerit, qui, *ut ſecederem,* juſſit. Epiſt. IX. p. 22.

Fuit vero formido illa, ſed juſta; formido, quæ Dominum timeret offendere. Formido, quæ præceptis Dei mallet obſequi, quam ſic coronari. Dicata enim in omnibus Deo mens, & fides divinis admonitionibus mancipata, credidit ſe, niſi Domino latebram tunc jubenti paruiſſet, etiam ipſa paſſione peccare. Cyprian. Vit. per Pontium. p. 13.

[3] A *Tertullo,* fratre noſtro cariſſimo, ratio reddetur: qui pro cetera ſua cura, quam impendens divinis operibus impertit, etiam hujus conſilii auctor fuit, ut cautus & mo-

Dionyſius's Flight

Dionyſius, Biſhop of *Alexandria*, who lived in the ſame age, has left the ſame ſtory likewiſe concerning himſelf, and ſwears to the truth of it: that in the time of a perſecution, he was commanded by God in a viſion, to retire from *Alexandria*, and was wonderfully preſerved and guarded by him in his retreat [1]. *And ſhall we not believe a moſt holy Biſhop*, ſays Mr. *Dodwell, even upon his oath* [2]? The ſame *Dionyſius* affirms likewiſe, that he had another viſion upon the ſubject of *reading Heretical books*, about which, he had ſome ſcruples, till a *voice from heaven expreſſly injoined him, to read them all without reſerve, becauſe he was able to examine and confute them* [3]. This reminds me of a viſion alſo which St. *Jerom* declares to have been given to himſelf, about a century after; *in which he was dragged to the Tribunal of Chriſt, and terribly threatened, and even ſcourged for the grievous ſin of reading ſecular and profane writers,* Cicero, Virgil, *and* Horace; *whom for that reaſon he reſolved never to take into his hands any more:* upon which *Ruffinus* rallies him with great ſpirit and ſmartneſs, for inventing and publiſhing ſo ſilly a lie [4]. And it muſt needs be thought ſtrange, that God ſhould injoin contra-

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& moderatus exiſterem, nec me in conſpectum publicum, & maxime ejus loci, ubi toties flagitatus & quæſitus fuiſſem, temere committerem. Fretus ergo & dilectione & religione veſtra, his litteris & hortor & mando, ut vos quorum minime illic invidioſa & non adeo periculoſa præſentia eſt, vice mea fungamini, &c. Ep. 5. p. 13.

[1] Ἐγὼ δὲ ϗ ἐνώπιον τȣ̃ Θεȣ̃ λαλῶ, ϗ αὐτὸς οἶδεν ὅτι ȣ̉ ψεύδομαι. ȣ̉δεμίαν ἐπ' ἐμαυτȣ̃ βαλλόμενος, οἰδ' ἀθεεὶ πεποίημαι τὴν φυγήν. Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccl. l. 6. c. 40.

[2] Quid hic faciemus? Viro Sanctiſſimo ne jurato quidem credemus? Diſſert. Cyprian. IV. § 17.

[3] Ὅραμα θεόπεμπτον ἐπέῤῥωσέ με. ϗ λόγος πρός με γενόμενος, προσέταξε διαῤῥήδην λέγων, πᾶσιν ἐντύγχανε οἷς ἂν εἰς χεῖρας λάβοις. διευθύνειν γὰρ ἕκαστα ϗ δοκιμάζειν ἱκανὸς εἶ. Euſeb. Hiſt. 7. 7.

[4] Oſtendam apud ipſum *(Hieronymum)* tam licita haberi perjuria, ut in ſcriptis quoque ſuis deprehendi ea non erubeſcat.—Et cetera cum dixiſſet ejuſmodi, quibus alienam eſſe a Chriſtiano aſſereret librorum ſæcularium lectionem, inſerit etiam revelationem quandam ad ſe divinitus factum. &c. Rufin. adv. Hieron. Vid. Oper. Hieron. Tom. 4. par. 2. p. 414. Edit. Benedict.

contrarieties to his Saints and Servants; ſhould command one *Father*, to read *Heretical books*, becauſe he was able to confute them, yet forbid it afterwards to another, who was full as able, to confute them, as his Predeceſſor. But if *Jerom*'s viſion deſerved to be treated by his contemporaries as a fiction, I ſee no reaſon, either from the nature of the thing, or the uſe, which is made of it, or the characters of the perſons concerned, why *the viſions of* Cyprian *and* Dionyſius, ſhould not merit the ſame treatment.

But how credible ſoever theſe viſions might appear to the generality of Chriſtians in thoſe days, yet there were many at the ſame time, as *Cyprian* himſelf confeſſes, who contemned and made a jeſt of them all, as mere illuſions and impertinent fancies: but they were a ſort of men, he ſays, *who would ſooner believe any thing againſt a Prieſt, than believe a Prieſt* [1].

In one of the Dialogues, commonly aſcribed to *Lucian*, the Chriſtians ſeem to be ridiculed, on the account of their *faſting and watching whole nights in hymns and prayers, as if they could infuſe by that means, what ſort of dreams or viſions they thought fit* [2]. Now there is a paſſage ſo applicable to this remark, in the antient narrative of the Martyrdom of St. *Ignatius*, as to make us almoſt imagine, that the author had alluded to it. The narrative was drawn up by perſons, who had accompanied the Martyr from *Aſia* to *Rome*, whoſe thoughts, for ſeveral months paſt, had been employed on nothing elſe but the ſubject of his Martyrdom, and it concludes thus. "Theſe "things were done on the 13th of the Kalends of *January*; "*Sura* and *Synecius* being the ſecond time Conſuls of *Rome*; of

Lucian

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[1] Quanquam ſciam ſomnia ridicula, & viſiones ineptas quibuſdam videri; ſed utique illis, qui malunt contra ſacerdotes credere, quam ſacerdoti. Ep. 68. p. 118.

[2] Ἔλεγον γὰρ εἰλίους δέκα ἄσιτοι διαμενοῦμεν. καὶ ἐπὶ παννύχους ὑμνῳδίας παγρυπνοῦντες, ὀνειρώττομεν τὰ τοιαῦτα.—— Philopatris. verſ. fin.

“ which we ourſelves were eye witneſſes. And the night following, as we were watching with tears in the houſe, and praying to God with bended knees, that he would impart to us weak men, ſome aſſurance of what was done, [with regard to the Martyr;] it happened, that falling into a ſlumber, ſome of us, on a ſudden, ſaw the bleſſed *Ignatius* ſtanding before us and embracing us; others beheld the bleſſed Martyr praying for us; others, as it were dropping with ſweat, as if juſt come from his great labor, and ſtanding by the Lord: which when we ſaw, being filled with joy, and comparing the viſions of our dreams with each other, we glorified God the giver of all good, and being aſſured of the bleſſedneſs of the Saint, we have made known unto you, both the day and the time, that being aſſembled together, according to the time of his Martyrdom, we may communicate with the combatant and moſt valiant Martyr of Chriſt [1].

But to declare freely what I think: whatever ground there might be in thoſe primitive ages, either to reject or to allow the authority of thoſe viſions, yet from all the accounts of them, that remain to us in theſe days, there ſeems to be the greateſt reaſon to ſuſpect, that they were all contrived, or authorized at leaſt, by the leading men of the Church, for the ſake of moderating and governing with more eaſe, the unruly ſpirit of the populace, in thoſe times of danger and difficulty. For they are generally applied, to excuſe the conduct of particular perſons, in ſome inſtances of it liable to cenſure; or to enforce ſome particular doctrine or diſcipline, warmly preſſed by ſome, and not well reliſhed by others; or to confirm things not onely trifling and frivolous, but ſometimes even ſuperſtitious and hurtfull to true religion.

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[1] Vid. Coteler. Patr. Apoſtol. Vol. II. Martyr. S. Ignat. § VII. p. 161. See alſo Archbiſhop *Wake*'s Tranſlation.

I have already obſerved, that it was the Heretic *Montanus*, who firſt gave a vogue to *prophetic viſions and ecſtaſies*, in the primitive Church. But when his pretenſions came afterwards to be ſuſpected and decried, it is remarkable, that thoſe, who undertook to expoſe and confute them, employed ſuch arguments againſt his prophecy, as ſeemed to ſhake the credit of all prophecy. For whereas the *Montaniſts* delivered their prophecies always in *ecſtaſy*, or with loſs of ſenſes; it was then urged againſt them, "that this was the proof of a Diabolical "ſpirit; that the true Prophets never had ſuch fits; never loſt "their ſenſes; but calmly and ſedately received and underſtood "whatever was revealed to them." And *Epiphanius* makes this the very criterion or diſtinguiſhing character between a true and falſe prophet; *that the true had no ecſtaſies, conſtantly retained his ſenſes, and with firmneſs of mind apprehended and uttered the divine oracles* [1]. *St. Jerom* alſo declares, *that the true Prophets never ſpake in ecſtaſy, or madneſs of heart, like* Montanus *and his mad women,* Priſca, *and* Maximilla, *but underſtood what they delivered, and could ſpeak or hold their tongues, whenever they pleaſed, which thoſe, who ſpake in ecſtaſy, could not do* [2]. *Euſebius* alſo mentions a book of one *Miltiades*, written againſt *Montanus*, the purpoſe of which was, to prove, *that a Prophet ought not to*

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[1] Ὅτε γὰρ ἦν χρεία, ἐν προφήταις, ἐν ἀληθινῷ πνεύματι, ϗ ἐῤῥωμένῃ δινοίᾳ ϗ παρακολουθοῦντι νῷ, οἱ αὐτοῦ ἅγιοι τὰ πάντα προεφήτευσαν. &c. Adv. Hæreſ. l. 2. T. 1. § 111. p. 404.

[2] Non enim loquitur (Propheta) in ἐκστάσι extaſi, ut *Montanus & Priſca Maximillaque* delirant, ſed quod prophetat, liber eſt viſionis intelligentis univerſa quæ loquitur. Hier. Op. Vol. III. p. 1559. Prolog. in Naum Proph.

Qui autem in ecſtaſi, id eſt, invitus loquitur, nec tacere nec loqui in ſua poteſtate habet. ibid. Prol. in Abacuc. p. 1591.

ſpeak in ecſtaſy [1]. Yet from the teſtimonies collected above, we have ſeen, that before the *Montaniſts* had brought thoſe *ecſtaſies* into diſgrace, the prophecy of the orthodox, as well as that of the Heretics, was declared to have been exerted in *ecſtaſy*, And it appears to have been the current opinion in thoſe earlier days, that the Prophets alſo of the old Teſtament received and uttered their revelations in *ecſtaſy*.

Athenagoras

Athenagoras expreſſly affirms it, and ſays, "that while they "were under the divine impulſe, they were tranſported out of "their ſenſes, and delivered in ecſtaſy what was inſpired, "being mere organs of the Holy Spirit, juſt as a pipe or flute "is of him, who blows into it [2]." *Juſtin Martyr* ſpeaks of them in the ſame ſtrain, "that the ſpirit of God deſcending "from above, made uſe of them, as of an inſtrument, juſt "as the quill ſtrikes the harp or lyre, to revele to us the knowledge of divine and heavenly things [3]." *Tertullian* alſo declares, "that he, who has the ſpirit within him, muſt neceſſarily be deprived of his ſenſes, eſpecially whenever he "beholds the glory of God, or when God ſpeaks by him, as "being then overſhadowed by the divine power [4].

Justin

Tertullian

Maximilla

Again, *Montanus*'s Aſſociate *Maximilla*, gave out, *that the gift of prophecy was to ceaſe with her*, and no other Prophet to ariſe after her. In anſwer to which, the Orthodox aſſerted, *that the true ſpirit of prophecy could never fail or ceaſe in the*

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[1] Ἐν ᾧ ἀποδείκνυσι περὶ τοῦ μὴ δεῖν προφήτην ἐν ἐκστάσει λαλεῖν. Euſeb. Hiſt. l. 5. c. 17.

[2] Οἱ κατ' ἔκστασιν τῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς, λογισμῶν, κινήσαντος αὐτοὺς τοῦ θείου πνεύματος, ἃ ἐνηργοῦντο ἐξεφώνησαν. ὡσεὶ καὶ αὐλητὴς αὐλὸν ἐμπνεῦσαι. Legat. pr. Chriſtian. p. 9. Edit. ad calcem Oper. Juſt. Mart.

[3] Ἵν' αὐτὸ τὸ θεῖον ἐξ οὐρανοῦ κατιὸν πλῆκτρον, ὥσπερ ὀργάνῳ κιθάρας τινὸς ἢ λύρας τοῖς δικαίοις ἀνδράσι χρώμενον, τὴν τῶν θείων ἡμῖν καὶ οὐρανίων ἀποκαλύψῃ γνῶσιν. Cohort. ad gent. p. 9. B.

[4] In ſpiritu enim homo conſtitutus, præſertim quum gloriam Dei conſpicit, vel per ipſum Deus loquitur, neceſſe eſt, excidat ſenſu—Adv. Marcion. l. 4. p. 537.

Church, till the conſummation of all things [1]. In which, as Mr. *Dodwell* owns, " the Ancients argued raſhly, and were miſ-" taken in their notion of the perpetuity of prophecy: ſince " *Euſebius*, who made it his buſineſs to explore and deduce the " ſucceſſion of thoſe prophetic gifts, intimates, that they were " ceaſed and vaniſhed in his days [2]:" that is, about the middle of the fourth century.

Since we are now conſidering the miracles of the *Cyprianic* age, I cannot forbear taking notice of two or three of thoſe wonderfull ſtories, which *Cyprian* himſelf atteſts, in that *magnificent treatiſe*, as it was called, concerning *the lapſed* Chriſtians, who, in the time of perſecution, had been induced, by the terrors of preſent death or tortures, to deny Chriſt, or offer incenſe to an Idol. " There was a man, ſays he, who went " up voluntarily to the Capitol, to deny the Lord; and when " he had denied him, was preſently ſtruck dumb.—A woman " alſo, who, after her lapſe, had the impudence to go to the " baths, was there ſeized by an unclean ſpirit, and thrown to " the ground, and with her teeth tore that tongue, with " which ſhe had been either talking, or feeding impiouſly; " and ſo became her own executioner; for ſhe died not long " after in great anguiſh and torments of her bowels." He introduces the next ſtory more ſolemnly, by declaring, that he himſelf was preſent and an eye-witneſs of it. " Certain Parents, " ſays he, too ſollicitous for their own ſafety, and flying from

Cyprian.

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[1] Φάσκει γὰρ ἡ παρ' αὐτοῖς λεγομένη Μαξιμίλλα ἡ προφῆτις—μετ' ἐμὲ προφῆτις ἐκέτι ἔσται, ἀλλὰ συντέλεια. &c. Epiphan. Hæreſ. 48. § 2. Δεῖν γὰρ εἶναι τὸ προφήτικον χάρισμα ἐν πάσῃ τῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ μέχρι τῆς τελείας παρουσίας, ὁ Ἀπόστολος ἀξιοῖ. Euſeb. Hiſt. 5. 17.

[2] Scio equidem lubenſque concedo, in tota hac *de prophetiarum perpetuitate*, hallucinatos eſſe veteres. Diſſert. Cypr. IV. § 13.

Euſebius, qui hoc in ſua hiſtoria notatu dignum duxerit, quouſque *donorum propheticorum* ſucceſſio permanavit, id ſane innuit, ſuo jam tempore illam defeciſſe. ibid. § 22.

" perſecution, left an infant daughter to the care of a nurſe; " who carried it preſently to the Magiſtrates. Theſe, being " then aſſembled with the people before an Idol, and ſeeing " the child not yet old enough to eat fleſh, gave it a piece of " bread dipt in wine, being the remains of what had been " offered to the Idol. The mother, ignorant of the fact, " within a ſhort time after took her daughter home again; " but the child was yet no more able to diſcover the crime committed, than ſhe was before, to underſtand or to hinder it. " The mother brought her therefore to us at the Sacrament, " while we knew nothing of the matter. But the child being " now mingled with the Saints, and impatient of the ſervice " and prayers, began to be ſeized, ſometimes with fits of crying, ſometimes with tortures of the mind, and, as if it had " been upon the rack, betrayed by all the ſigns, which it's " tender age could give, a ſenſe of guilt and conſciouſneſs of " the fact. The ſervice being ended, when the Deacon began " to give the Cup to all preſent, and it came to the child's " turn, the little one, by divine inſtinct, turned away it's " face, held it's lips cloſe ſhut, and refuſed the cup: the Deacon perſiſted, and poured a little down its throat, tho' by " force: upon this, convulſions and vomitings inſued: the " Euchariſt could not ſtay in a body and mouth ſo defiled: " the conſecrated potion of the Lord's blood burſt out of it's " polluted bowels: ſo great is the power, ſo great the majeſty " of the Lord: the ſecrets of darkneſs are detected by it's " light: nor could hidden crimes be conceled from the Prieſt " of God: for this happened to an infant, which was not yet " of age to ſpeak, or tell the crimes, which others had committed upon it. There was another woman, ſays *Cyprian*, " who, after ſhe had taken the Sacrament with us unobſerved,

" was inſtantly ſeized, with pains and torments, and fell " down convulſed and trembling, as if ſhe had ſwallowed a " ſword or deadly poyſon: and her crime, which had eſcaped " the notice of men, met with it's puniſhment from God. " Another, who had attempted with her polluted hands to open " her cheſt," (in which the conſecrated elements, according to the cuſtom of that age, were kept for her uſe at home,) " fire " burſt out of it in ſuch a manner, that ſhe durſt not touch it. " Another man, who had alſo been defiled, having had the " aſſurance to take a part of the conſecrated bread, among the " reſt, undiſcovered, could neither eat nor handle it, but " inſtead of it, found a coal of fire in his hands [1].

Now what other notion can we reaſonably entertain of theſe ſtrange ſtories, but that they were partly forged, and partly aggravated and dreſſed up into this tragical form, from ſome accidental diſorders, which the ſenſe of a conceled guilt, and the dread of God's judgments upon it, would naturally raiſe in anxious minds, on that awful occaſion of receiving the Sacrament? For it is certain, that they were of the greateſt uſe, in theſe times of danger and trial, to ſupport the diſcipline of the Church, which the *Lord guarded*, as Mr. *Dodwell* ſays, *by theſe terrors, as by the ſword of a Cherubim* [2]. Since none of thoſe, who had ſecretly lapſed, or been weak enough to deny the faith, and from a deſire of conceling their ſhame, had evaded the penance of the Church, durſt either come openly to the Sacrament, or take it even privately at home, or yet wholly abſtain from it, when the divine judgements were ſo ſignally exerted upon all, who had ventured on any of thoſe expedients, before they had made a public ſatisfaction ~~for~~ for their crime, and been abſolved of it in form by the Paſtors of the Church. And it was without doubt for this end, that all theſe ſtories, with many more of the ſame kind, were ſo pompouſly and rhetorically ſet forth by this eminent Biſhop, in his celebrated treatiſe concerning the *lapſed* Chriſtians.

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[1] Vid. Cyprian de Lapſis. Edit. Nic. Rigalt. p. 175.

[x] Ita munivit Eccleſiæ ſuæ Dominus, quaſi gladio quodam Cherubico, ſanctam undequaque diſciplinam. Diſſ. Iren. 2. § 54.

5.

§ 5. As to the gift of *expounding the Scriptures, or the myſteries of God*, by a divine inſpiration, which is clamed likewiſe by the Primitive Fathers, there is not the leaſt trace of it to be found in any age of the Church, from the days of the Apoſtles. For in the ſecond and third Centuries, the very period, in which all the other miraculous gifts are ſuppoſed to have floriſhed in their greateſt vigor, it is certain, as we have ſeen above, that a moſt ſenſeleſs, extravagant, and enthuſiaſtic method of expounding prevailed, which has ever ſince been utterly ſlighted and rejected: whereas in theſe later days, when all extraordinary gifts are confeſſedly ceaſed, a clear, ſolid, and rational way of interpreting generally obtains, as the warmeſt advocates of Antiquity are forced to allow. And whenever any particular Father happens to be cenſured for his ridiculous comments on ſacred Writ, his Apologiſts with one voice alledge, that ſuch expoſitions are not to be charged to the man, *but to the age, in which he lived*, which could not reliſh or indure any better.

Justin

Juſtin Martyr however lays claim to this gift, as *conferred upon him by the ſpecial grace of God* [1], upon which Mr. *Tillemont* declares, " that of all the extraordinary graces, which the " Holy Spirit beſtowed upon the Church in thoſe times, there

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[1] Ἀπεκάλυψεν οὖν ἡμῖν πάντα ὅσα καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν γραφῶν διὰ τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ νενοήκαμεν. Juſt. Dial. Par. 2. p. 352. Edit. Thirlb. it. p. 258, 391.

" were few ſo conſiderable, as that of underſtanding the Scriptures, which was communicated by ſingular favor to *Juſtin* " [1]." Yet from all the writings and monuments of the very earlieſt Fathers, which remain to us, it is manifeſt, beyond all contradiction, that there never was any ſuch gift in the Church, after the times of the Apoſtles; and that *Juſtin* in particular, had no better claim to it, than any of the reſt. And if thoſe Fathers then, through a fervency of zeal, or an enthuſiaſtic turn of mind, could miſtake ſuch fanciful expoſitions, for divine inſpirations, I ſee no reaſon, why they might not as eaſily be deluded in every other inſtance of thoſe pretended gifts, which flattered the ſame zeal and ſpirit, that ſo ſtrongly poſſeſſed them.

It is a common caſe with men of great piety, zealouſly perſuaded of the truth and high importance of any religious doctrine, to think it reaſonable, that God ſhould interpoſe himſelf miraculouſly in favor of it, when it happens to be oppoſed by any earthly power and in danger of being oppreſſed: and when they are thus prepared by their prejudices, to expect a divine interpoſition, they liſten to every pretenſion of that ſort, which craft or wild enthuſiaſm can deviſe, without allowing their reaſon to examine it, or to ſuggeſt the ſuſpicion of a fraud. There are many inſtances of this in Hiſtory, and a remarkable one in our own; that of *the Holy Maid of Kent*, in the reign of *Henry the 8th:* who by the pretence of *viſions and divine revelations*, communicated in *trances or ecſtaſy*, contrived by Popiſh Prieſts, to raiſe the ſinking credit of their cauſe, drew in Biſhop *Fiſher*, with many other eminent perſons, to take her for a *Propheteſs*, divinely inſpired, as *Tertullian* did his *ecſtatic Maid*. Yet this modern Prelate was more learned

Maid of Kent.

Fisher.

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[1] Memoirs. Tom. 2. p. 358, 380.

and judicious, than any one perhaps of all the antient Fathers, and by all accounts of him, as pious and religious too: ſince he loſt his life, or, in the ſtile of the *Romiſh* Church, ſuffered martyrdom, for the ſake of thoſe very prejudices, which betrayed him into this folly. But the Lord *Cromwell*, expoſtulating with him on that ſubject, rightly told him, " that the " true reaſon, which induced him to give credit to the maid, " was the matter of her prophecies; to which he was ſo " addicted, that nothing could come amiſs, which ſerved to " that end; and he appealed to his conſcience, whether, if " ſhe had propheſied in favor of the King's proceedings, he " would have given ſuch eaſy credit to her, and not have examined the matter farther [1].

Tongues.

Irenæus,

§ 6. The *gift of tongues* alſo is clamed, as we have ſeen among the reſt, and affirmed to have been actually poſſeſſed by the primitive Chriſtians: for if the teſtimony of *Irenæus* can be credited, many were indued with it in his days, and heard *to ſpeak all kinds of languages in the Church*. And in truth, this gift, in the common eſtimation of human reaſon, has been thought ſo eſſentially neceſſary to the propagation of the Goſpel, in thoſe firſt ages, that the Advocates of the primitive miracles, truſting to that hypotheſis, inſtead of ſearching into the fact, urge the neceſſity of its continuance after the days of the Apoſtles, as a proof of the continuance of all the reſt. Yet how great ſoever the importance of it may ſeem to be, it is evident, as I have elſewhere ſhewn, from the origin, nature and exerciſe of it, as they are repreſented in the New Teſtament, that it was not permanent or laſting, either in the Church at large, or in thoſe particular perſons who were principally favored with it, but was granted onely on certain ſpecial occaſions, and then again withdrawn, even from the Apoſtles themſelves; ſo that, in the ordinary courſe of their miniſtry, they appear to have been generally deſtitute of it.

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[1] See Bp. Burnet, Hiſt. Reform. Vol. I. p. 154.

Irenæus however declares it to have been indulged to many in his days. But it is very remarkable, that this Primitive Biſhop, who aſcribes it ſo liberally to others, appears to have been in great want of it himſelf, for the propagation of the Goſpel in his own *Dioceſe*, among the *Celtæ, or Gauls*; where, as Dr. *Cave* interprets his words, *it was not the leaſt part of his trouble, that he was forced to learn the language of the country; a rude and barbarous dialect, before he could do any good upon them* [1]. Nor is it leſs ſtrange alſo, that from the time of *Irenæus*, there is not a ſingle Father, in all the ſucceding ages, who, upon his authority, has ventured to carry on the ſame pretenſion, or make the leaſt claim to it; or to ſpeak of it in any other manner, than as a gift peculiar to the firſt Chriſtians, in the times of the Apoſtles. And I might riſk the merit of my argument on this ſingle point; that, after the Apoſtolic times, there is not in all hiſtory one inſtance, either well atteſted, or even ſo much as mentioned, of any particular perſon, who had ever exerciſed this gift, or pretended to exerciſe it, in any age or country whatſoever. Mr. *Dodwell* ſuppoſes it to have ceaſed, in the reign of *M. Aurelius*, about ſixty years after the death of St. *John* [2]. But it is not credible, that a gift of ſuch eminent uſe ſhould intirely ceaſe, while all the reſt were ſubſiſting in full vigor, and abounding every day more and more. If, according to the common hypotheſis, we admit them all to be true, it is not poſſible, I ſay, to imagine any cauſe, why this in particular ſhould be withdrawn, and the reſt continued: but if, agreeably to my ſyſtem, we conſider them all, as fictitious, we then ſee an obvious and manifeſt reaſon for it. For all the other extraordinary gifts, *of healing diſeaſes, caſting out Devils, viſions, and ecſtatic revelations*, afford great room to Impoſtors, to exert all their craft of ſurprizing and dazzling the ſenſes of the ſimple, the credulous, and the ſuperſtitious of all ranks: whereas the *gift of tongues* cannot eaſily be counterfeited, or a pretenſion to it impoſed on men of ſenſe, or on any indeed, but thoſe, who are utterly illiterate and ſtrangers to all tongues but their own: and to acquire a number of languages by natural means, and to a degree, that might make them paſs for a ſupernatural gift, was a work of ſo much difficulty and labor, as rendered it impracticable to ſupport a pretenſion of that kind, for a ſucceſſion of many years. And this, in all probability, was the real cauſe of it's being dropped ſo early in thoſe primitive ages: for after the mention of it by *Irenæus*, we find it no longer in any ſubſequent liſt of the miraculous gifts, nor the leaſt hint of it's continuance in the Church, in any later writer, from that time, down to the preſent. If this then appears to have been the caſe of this particular gift; that a falſe claim to it was made by the early Fathers, and held up for a while, till it could no longer be ſupported; it is ſufficient, one would think, of itſelf, to blaſt the general credit of all the reſt, tho' no particular mark of fraud could have been fixed on each of them ſeparately: but when there is not a ſingle one among them all, which, either from it's nature, or end, or manner of exertion, or the character of its witneſſes, does not furniſh juſt ground to ſuſpect it as fictitious, it muſt needs perſuade every rational inquirer, that they were all derived from the ſame ſource of craft and impoſture.

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[1] See Cave's Lives of Saints. Vol. I. p. 169. § IX.

[2] A Marci temporibus deficere cœperunt gratiæ illæ extraordinariæ—defecere eorundem dona linguarum. Diſſ. in Iren. 2. § 44.

In ſhort; if we trace the hiſtory of this gift from it's origin, we ſhall find, that, in the times of the Goſpel, in which alone the miracles of the Church are allowed to be true by all Chriſtians, it was the firſt gift, which was conferred upon the Apoſtles, in a public and illuſtrious manner, and reckoned ever after among the principal of thoſe, which were imparted to the firſt converts. But in the ſucceding ages, when miracles began to be of a ſuſpected and dubious character, it is obſervable; that this gift is mentioned but once by a ſingle writer, and then vaniſhed of a ſudden, without the leaſt notice, or hint given by any of the antients, either of the manner, or time, or cauſe of it's vaniſhing. Laſtly, in the later ages, when the miracles of the Church were not onely ſuſpected, but found to be falſe by our Reformers, and conſidered as ſuch ever ſince by all Proteſtants, this gift has never once been heard of, or pretended to by the Romaniſts themſelves, tho' they challenge at the ſame time all the other gifts of the Apoſtolic days. From all which, I think, we may reaſonably infer, that *the gift of tongues*, may be conſidered, as a proper teſt and criterion, for determining the miraculous pretenſions of all Churches, which derive their deſcent from the Apoſtles: and conſequently, if, in the liſt of their extraordinary gifts, they cannot ſhew us this, we may fairly conclude, that they have none elſe to ſhew, which are real and genuin.

I have now run through all the various kinds of the miraculous gifts, which are pretended to have ſubſiſted in the Church, during the ſecond and third centuries; and have opened the genuin ſtate of them, as far as it is diſcoverable to us at this diſtance, from the moſt authentic monuments and teſtimonies of the principal Fathers of thoſe centuries. Ages, which are always ſtiled the pureſt, and in which theſe very Fathers bore the firſt character; not onely on the account of their piety and integrity, but of their abilities alſo and learning. If any ſuſpicions then can be entertained againſt ſuch witneſſes, they will be ſtronger ſtill againſt all who ſucceded them, eſpecially after the Empire became Chriſtian, when, according to the hypotheſis of the very Admirers of theſe primitive ages, a general corruption both of faith and morals began more openly to infect the Chriſtian Church: which by that revolution, as St. *Jerom* ſays, *loſt as much of her virtue, as it had gained of power and wealth* [1].

But in the caſe of theſe miracles, there is one circumſtance, common to all the writers, who atteſt them, as well in the earlier, as the later ages; that tho' their aſſertions be ſtrong, their inſtances are weak; and when, in proof of what they affirm, they deſcend to alledge any particular facts, they are uſually ſo unlucky in the choice of them, that inſtead of ſtrengthening, they weaken the credit of their general affirmation, and, from the abſurdity of each miracle related by them, furniſh a freſh objection to their power of working any. This the reader can hardly fail to obſerve, from the examples already produced; to which I ſhall add one or two more, of the moſt conſiderable, which are tranſmitted to us from the ſame ages, and which I had before omitted to recite.

Smyrna

One of the moſt authentic and celebrated pieces in all primitive antiquity, is *the circular letter of the Church of Smyrna*, containing a narrative of the Martyrdom of St. *Polycarp*, their Biſhop, and *of the many miracles*, as Mr. *Dodwell* ſays, *which*

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[1] Et poſtquam ad Chriſtianos Principes venerit, potentia quidem & divitiis major, ſed virtutibus minor eſt. Oper. Tom. 2. par. 2. p. 91.

I *made*

made it illuſtrious [1]. This letter, written about the middle of the ſecond century, informs us, " that when that Saint was " entring the liſts, in which he was to be burnt, there was ſo " great a tumult, that nobody could be heard.——But there " came a voice to him from heaven, ſaying, *be ſtrong*, Polycarp, " *and acquit thyſelf like a man:* and tho' no body ſaw, who it was " that ſpake, yet many of the brethren heard the voice [2].—As " ſoon as he had finiſhed his prayer, the executioner kindled the " fire, and the flame began to blaze to a great height. When " behold, ſays the writer, a mighty wonder appeared to us, whoſe " lot it was to ſee it, and who were reſerved by heaven, to declare " to others what we had ſeen. For the flame, forming a kind " of arch, like to the ſail of a ſhip filled with the wind, en" compaſſed the body of the martyr, as in a circle; who ſtood " in the midſt of it, not as fleſh, which is burnt, but bread, " which is baked, or as gold and ſilver glowing in a furnace: " and ſo ſweet a ſmell iſſued from him all the while, as if it " had been the ſmoke of frankincenſe or ſome rich ſpices. " At length, when theſe wicked men ſaw, that his body could " not be conſumed by fire, they commanded the executioner " to draw near, and to thruſt his ſword into him; which " being done accordingly, there came out of his Body *a Dove*, " and ſo great a quantity of blood, as quite extinguiſhed the " fire: ſo that the whole multitude were amazed, to ſee ſo " great a difference between the Unbelievers, and the Elect [3]."

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[1] Inter præcipua ſacræ antiquitatis monumenta, quæ ex primis Eccleſiæ temporibus, ad noſtram ætatem pervenerunt, jure merito computatur illa egregia epiſtola, quam de beati Polycarpi martyrio Eccleſia Smyrnenſis conſcripſit. Ruinart. Act. Martyr. p. 28.

Quanta autem miracula hoc Martyrium inſignierint, teſtes habemus ipſos illos Polycarpi Smyrnæos. Dodw. Diſſ. Iren. II. § XXXII.

[2] Vid. Martyr. Polyc. c. 8, 9. Apud Coteler. Patres Apoſt. T. 2. p. 198.

[3] Vid. ibid. c. 15, 16.

Yet it appears from the ſequel of the narrative, that there was fire enough ſtill left, to conſume the body to aſhes, which was executed with great care, that the Chriſtians might not be able to preſerve the leaſt remains of it.

Eusebius

The greateſt part of this Epiſtle is tranſcribed by *Euſebius*, who has omitted the mention of *the Dove*, which flew out of his body; for which reaſon Mr. *Dodwell and Archbiſhop Wake* have thought fit alſo to omit it. Yet all the oldeſt copies ſtill extant, from which *Archbiſhop Uſher*, *Cotelerius* and *Ruinart*, publiſhed their ſeveral editions, retain this paſſage [1]: which *Euſebius* might probably drop for the ſame reaſon, for which Mr. *Dodwell* and Biſhop *Wake* alſo, profeſs to have dropt it; viz. for the ſake of rendring the narrative *the leſs ſuſpected* [2].

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[1] Præ aliis latinis verſionibus, id habet Uſſeriana, quod omnium omnino aliarum longe antiquiſſima ſit, utpote quæ non multo poſt Euſebii tempora facta fuerit: quamque exiſtimat Uſſerius ipſam eandem fuiſſe, quæ olim in Eccleſia Gallicana legebatur. Ruinart. ib. p. 28. Vid. it. Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. 4. c. 15.

[2] Nec enim illa urgemus, quæ de Columba habet Codex Uſſerianus, quæ nulla utique comparent in Euſebio aut Ruffino, Nec enim ſuppoſititiis, ſuſpectæve fidei monumentis immiſtis, verorum fidem cenſuimus derogandam. Dodw. Diſſ. Iren. II. § XXXII.

N. B. Archbiſhop *Wake* explaning his reaſons for omitting the ſtory of *the Dove*, ſays; "Now tho' there may ſeem to have "been ſomething of a foundation for ſuch "a miracle, in the raillery of *Lucian*, "upon the death of *Peregrinus* the Philo"ſopher, who burnt himſelf about the "ſame time that *Polycarp* ſuffered, and "from whoſe *Funeral Pile he makes a Vul*"*tur to aſcend*, in oppoſition, it may be, "to *Polycarp*'s *Pigeon*, (if indeed he de"ſigned, as a learned man has conjec"tured, under the ſtory of that Philoſo"pher, to ridicule the life and ſufferings "of *Polycarp*) yet I confeſs, I am ſo little "a friend to *ſuch kind of Miracles*, that I "thought it better with *Euſebius*, to omit "that circumſtance, than to mention it "from Bp. *Uſher*'s Manuſcript, &c." [Prelim. Diſcour. p. 57.] which Manuſcript however, he afterwards declares, *to be ſo well atteſted, that we need not any farther aſſurance of the truth of it.* p. 59.

Theſe deaths of the Primitive Martyrs ſeldom failed of being accompanied by miracles, which, as we find them related in the old Martyrologies, were generally copied from each other: concerning ſweet ſmells iſſuing from their bodies, and their wonderfull reſiſtance of all kinds of torture; and the miraculous cures of their wounds and bruiſes, ſo as to tire their tormentors by the difficulty of deſtroying them, which yet, after a vain profuſion of miracles, was always effected at the laſt.

To the end of this letter is annexed the following advertiſement. “ The Epiſtle was tranſcribed by *Caius*, from the copy of *Irenæus*, the diſciple of *Polycarp*; and I, *Socrates*, tranſcribed it at *Corinth*. After which, I, *Pionius*, again wrote it out, from the copy above mentioned, having ſearched it out by the revelation of *Polycarp*, who directed me to it, *&c.*

Caius
Socrates
Pionius.

Euſebius alſo relates a miracle, wrought by *Narciſſus*, Biſhop of *Jeruſalem*, about the end of the ſecond, or the beginning of the third century: “ that when the ſacred oil was almoſt ſpent, in the vigil of *Eaſter*, and the people were in a great conſternation about it, he ordered thoſe, who had the care of the lamps, to go and draw water from a certain well in the neighbourhood, and to bring it away to him: which being accordingly done, *Narciſſus*, after he had prayed over it, commanded them to pour it into the lamps with a ſincere faith in Chriſt, upon which, by a miraculous and divine power, the nature of the water was changed into the fatneſs of oil: of which oil, as *Euſebius* ſays, ſeveral ſmall quantities were preſerved by great numbers of the faithfull, to his time, which was about an hundred years after the date of the miracle [1].”

Narciſsus,

The ſame hiſtorian, giving an account of the horrible barbarities, which were exerciſed upon the Chriſtians of *Palæſtine*, concludes one of his ſtories in the following manner; “ after theſe things had been tranſacted many days ſucceſſively, this miracle appeared. There was a clear and bright ſky, and a remarkable ſerenity of the air: when on a ſudden, the pillars in the portico's of the City, poured out drops of tears; and when there was not the leaſt moiſture in the air,

Pillars wept.

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[1] Παρὰ δὲ πλείςοις τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἐπὶ μήκιςον ἐξ ἐκείνȣ ϗ εἰς ἡμᾶς βραχύ τι δεῖγμα τȣ̃ τότε θαύματος φυλαχθῆναι. Hiſt. Eccl. 6. 9.

" the ſtreets and public places were all wet, no body knew " how, as if water had been thrown upon them: ſo that it " became a common talk, that the earth wept for the impiety, " which was committed; and to reprove the relentleſs and " ſavage nature of men, ſtones, and inanimate bodies ſhed " tears for what had happened [1]." A deſcription of this kind, might eaſily be excuſed in an Orator or a Poet, but when an Hiſtorian, after he has raiſed our attention, and prepared us to expect ſomething great and miraculous, tells us onely, *of ſtones ſhedding tears for the impieties of men*, he debaſes the gravity of Hiſtory, and makes miracles themſelves contemptible.

Mr. *Dodwell*, as I have before ſaid, has, with great diligence, deduced the Hiſtory of the primitive miracles, down to theſe very times of *Euſebius*; which he then ſhuts up with the eſtabliſhment of Chriſtianity by human laws, declaring, " that many things concurred to recommend the credit of the " preceding ages, which have no place in thoſe, that followed " [2]." and ſpeaking of the life of *Gregory*, called the *Wonder-worker*, written by *Gregory of Nyſſa*, a Biſhop of the greateſt piety and gravity, he ſays, " in this Life there are many " things, which breath the air of impoſture and the genius of " the fourth century, ſo that I dare not mix them with what " is more genuin, for fear of hurting the credit of all [3]." For this reaſon therefore, it was my firſt intention to confine my inquiries alſo to the ſame period; but having ſince perceived, that ſeveral of our learned Divines and principal advocates of the Chriſtian faith have not ſcrupled, to aſſert the ſucceſſion

Gregory.

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[1] Ἐφ' οἷς πλείσταις ἡμέραις ἐπιτελουμένοις, τοιοῦτόν τι παράδοξον συμβαίνει. Ibid. c. IX. p. 425,

[2] Multa enim faciunt ad primorum Seculorum commendandam fidem, quæ locum in ſequentium ſeculorum teſtimoniis prorſus nullum habent. Diſſert. Iren. 2. § 62.

[3] Fateor ibi multa legi, quarti, in quo vixit Gregorius, ſeculi, Impoſtorumque genium referentia. &c. ibid. § 55.

of true miracles, to the end even of the fifth century, I thought it neceſſary, to extend my argument to the ſame length, leſt I ſhould ſeem to neglect any evidence, which could be offered to me, and eſpecially ſuch, as is declared to be *convincing* and *deciſive* by men of their character. But from every ſtep, that we advance forward, we ſhall readily perceive, that Mr. *Dodwell*, who had as much piety and more learning, than any of them, has in this reſpect ſhewn more judgement too, by reſtraining the miraculous powers of the Church to the three firſt centuries.

In the fourth century, we find ſome of the principal Fathers delivering themſelves on this ſubject ſo variouſly and inconſiſtently, as ſhews, that tho' they were aſhamed to deny, what they knew to be true, yet they were deſirous to inculcate, what they knew to be falſe. For on ſome occaſions, when they are preſſed, they plainly confeſs, that miracles were then ceaſed; yet on others, they appeal to them again as common, and performed among them every day. For example, St. *Chryſoſtom* obſerves, " that in the infancy of the " Church, the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit were beſtowed " even on the unworthy, becauſe thoſe early times ſtood in " need of that help, for the more eaſy progagation of the " Goſpel; but now, ſays he, they are not given even to the " worthy, becauſe the preſent ſtrength of the Chriſtian faith is " no longer in want of them [1]." In another place, ſpeaking of the miraculous powers of the Apoſtles, and of the force, which they had in converting the Gentile world, " wherefore, " adds he, becauſe no miracles are wrought now, we are not " to take it for a proof, that none were wrought then; for

Chrysostom

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[1] Νῦν δὲ οὐδὲ ἀξίοις δέδοται, ἡ γὰρ ἰσχὺς τῆς πίστεως οὐκέτι ταύτης δεῖται τῆς συμμαχίας. Op. T. 3. p. 65. Edit. Bened.

"then they were of uſe, but now they are not: for the firſt "planters of the Goſpel were ſimple and ignorant men, and "had nothing to teach from themſelves; but what they received "from God, that they delivered to the world: ſo we likewiſe "of theſe times, bring nothing indeed of our own, but what "we received from them, that we declare to all.——Nor do "we yet perſuade by the force of our reaſon, but evince the "truth of our doctrines from the holy Scriptures, and the "miracles then wrought in confirmation of them [1]." Again, ſpeaking of the Jews, in our Saviour's time, who *deſired a ſign*, he ſays, "there are ſome alſo even now, who deſire and aſk, "why are not miracles performed ſtill at this day? and why "are there no perſons, who raiſe the dead and cure diſeaſes?" To which he replies, "that it was owing to the want of faith "and virtue and piety in thoſe times [2]." On another occaſion alſo he declares, "that St. *Paul*'s Handkerchiefs could "once do greater miracles, than all the Chriſtians of his days "could do, with ten thouſand prayers and tears [3]." Laſtly, in *his books of conſolation*, addreſſed to his friend *Stagirius*, who was ſuppoſed to be poſſeſſed and horribly tormented by an evil ſpirit, it is expreſly ſignified, "that neither the tombs of the "Martyrs, to which he had often applied for relief, nor the "repeated endeavours of the moſt holy and celebrated Exor"ciſts of thoſe days, were able to drive the Devil out of "him [4].

Pauls handkerchiefs.

There

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[1] Ibid. Op. T. x. p. 45, 46.

[2] Καὶ γὰρ καὶ νῦν εἰσιν οἱ ζητοῦντες καὶ λέγοντες, διατὶ μὴ καὶ νῦν σημεῖα γίνεται. &c. Ib. T. 8. p. 138. A. it. T. xi. p. 387, 388.

[3] Id de Sacerdot. l. 4. Op. T. 1. p. 411. A.

[4] Ad Stagir. lib. 1. Oper. T. 1. p. 179. A.

N. B. St. *Chryſoſtom* is thought to have written theſe books to *Stagirius*, about A. D. 380. which Mr. *Whiſton* recommends, as very *curious, and well worth the peruſal of inquiſitive men.* [See Dæmoniacs, There are ſeveral other paſſages in this Father of the ſame ſtrain; in which he allows the ceſſation of miracles, and ſpeaks of

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niacs, p. 60.] I have run them ſlightly over, and ſhall give the reader a ſhort abſtract, of what I chiefly collected from them, ſince it relates to my preſent ſubject, and helps ſtill to illuſtrate the true character and principles of this fourth age.

ſtagirius. *Stagirius* was the Son and Heir of a noble family in *Antioch*, trained up in the Chriſtian Religion; who, in contradiction to the will, and earneſt remonſtrances of his Father, had taken a reſolution to enter into the Monaſtick life: for which purpoſe he ſeems to have withdrawn himſelf, in a ſecret manner, tho' with the privity of his Mother, into a certain Monaſtery, where he lay conceled from the purſuit and diſcovery of his Father. On his firſt entrance however, he did not eaſily reliſh the rough diſcipline of the cloyſter; but preſuming on the ſplendor of his birth, expected ſome exemption from the ſeverer parts of it; till being inured to it by degrees, and confirmed by the example and admonitions of the Elder Monks, he became equal to the moſt perfect of them in the frequency of his faſtings and watchings, and all the other arts of mortifying his body. But now the Devil reſolved, if poſſible, to ſhake his conſtancy, and attacked him with all that train of evils, which his power and malice could inflict: by which he reduced him at laſt to ſuch a ſtate of melancholy and deſpair, as made life itſelf inſupportable to him. In this condition he laid open his complaints to his friends, and particularly to St. *Chryſoſtom*, by whom they are ſeverally enumerated and ſummed up in the following manner.

Firſt, That in the former part of his life, while he lived like other men in the world, he never ſuffered any thing of this kind; but after he had crucified himſelf to the world, he preſently fell under the ſenſe of this diſorder, which was ſufficient to throw him into deſpair.

2dly, That many, who, from a luxurious life, had been afflicted in the ſame way, were yet relieved in a ſhort time. and reſtored to perfect health, ſo as to marry, and become the Fathers of many children, and enjoy all the other delights of the world, without ever relapſing into the ſame miſery: whereas he who had ſpent ſo much time in faſtings and watchings and the other auſterities of the Monkiſh diſcipline, could find no reſpite from his affliction.

3dly, That the holy man, who had ſhewn ſo much power in healing others in the ſame caſe, was not able to do him any ſervice; neither he himſelf, nor any of the reſt, who were with him, and more powerful even than he in theſe cures, but were all forced to go away with ſhame to themſelves.

4thly, That he was ſo oppreſſed on this account with grief and deſpair, as to be frequently tempted to hang, or drown, or throw himſelf from ſome precipice.

5thly, That his companions, who entered with him into the ſame ſort of life, continued to live at their eaſe and undiſturbed, while he had no peace or reſt, but was confined as it were to a priſon, of them even with contempt, “ as proper onely to rouſe the “ dull and ſluggiſh, but uſeleſs to men of philoſophical minds; “ that

of all others the moſt wretched, ſince no fetters of iron were ſo grievous as the chain, with which he was bound.

6thly, That what chiefly diſturbed and made him tremble even with fear, was, leſt his Father ſhould come to the knowledge of his caſe, and do ſome great miſchief to thoſe holy men, who firſt received him; and truſting to his power and wealth, and hurried on by his paſſion, ſhould attempt all ſorts of violence againſt them. That his mother indeed had hitherto been able to concele the matter from him, and elude the effect of his inquiries; but if he ſhould happen to detect her diſſimulation, his reſentment would be intolerable both to her and to the Monks.

Laſtly, That the completion of his miſery was, to have no confidence or hope in what was to come: and not to know, whether he ſhould ever find any cure or eaſe, ſince his expectations had been ſo often fruſtrated, by relapſing ſtill into the ſame evil.

Now from this detail of his complaints, as they were repreſented by himſelf, what elſe can we collect, but that this noble Youth, diſguſted perhaps by ſome little domeſtic uneaſineſs, had been ſeduced by certain Monks, to bid adieu to the world and retire into a Convent. In which retreat, by reflecting at leiſure on the raſhneſs of his reſolution, and the provocation, which he had given by it to an indulgent Parent, he ſeems to have been ſtung with remorſe: while the auſterities, which he now practiſed, and by which he hoped to calm his mind, and conciliate the favor of heaven, inſtead of appeaſing, ſerved onely to increaſe his anxiety, and reduced him by degrees to ſuch a weakneſs and dejection both of body and mind, as brought on horrible Symptoms, and Epileptic fits, and made him completely miſerable. This naturally infuſed ſcruples and ſuſpicions, which he himſelf gently intimates, that he was in a wrong way, and owed all his ſufferings to his unhappy change of life; and that a return therefore to the world, where he had never felt any ſuch, would free him from them again, by affording him the comforts of matrimony, and children, and all the other ſweets of ſocial life.

That this was the real caſe and ſource of his complaints, is evident from his own account of them. Let us ſee then what ſort of comfort St. *Chryſoſtom* thought fit to adminiſter to him in this ſad ſtate. This holy Father had himſelf alſo, when young, taken the ſame reſolution of retiring from the world; in conſequence of which, after he had ſpent ſeveral years in a Monaſtery, he betook himſelf to the mountains, where he lived, as an Hermit, in a ſolitary cave, for two years more: till perceiving at laſt, that the infirmity of his body, could no longer indure the ſeverity of that diſcipline, he quitted his ſolitude, and choſe to reſide in *Antioch*, where he is ſuppoſed to have written this elaborate conſolation to *Stagirius*. But tho' he left the *Aſcetic life* himſelf, when he found it hurtfull to his health, he never once ſuggeſts the ſame advice to his friend *Stagirius*, nor ever mentions the onely remedy, which could afford him any ſolid comfort;

“ that they were frequently liable to ſiniſter ſuſpicions, of “ being mere phantaſms and illuſions, and that it was a proof “ of

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comfort; viz. to quit the place and way of life, which had given birth to all his troubles; and to reconcile himſelf to his Father, by returning to the world, and by the uſe of it's innocent pleaſures, to calm the diſorders of his mind, and reſtore it to it's former tranquillity.

This, I ſay, was the moſt rational and effectual comfort which could be adminiſtred to him; but inſtead of this, St. *Chryſoſtom* employs all his rhetoric to perſuade him, that his ſufferings were the ſure marks of the divine favor, and had been of the greateſt ſervice to him: that he could not but remember, on his firſt entrance into the Monaſtery, and before the Devil began to vex him, how difficult he found it, to comply with the rules of the ſociety; how haughty and ſluggiſh he was; how hard to be rouſed from his bed; and how angry with thoſe, who diſturbed him: but from the time of this trial and ſtruggle with the Devil, all that difficulty was at an end, and no man ſurpaſſed him in all thoſe auſterities and exerciſes of devotion, which conſtitute the perfection of the Chriſtian life. He exhorts him therefore to perſevere in his faſtings and watchings, and all his other mortifications, as the onely means of baffling all theſe efforts and terrors, by which the Devil was laboring to drive him from that bleſſed courſe. That while he was immerſed in the pleaſures of the world, or was yet a novice and raw in the Monaſtic life, God would not expoſe him to this trial, nor ſuffer the Devil to attack him; knowing, that he would then be an unequal match, and fall an eaſy prey to the Adverſary: but now that he was become firm and perfect in all his exerciſes, God committed him to the Stadium, as an expert champion, and ſure to come off with glory from the combat. That as to the trouble, which he ſuffered on the account of his Father, it was a weakneſs to afflict himſelf for what might or might not happen hereafter: that his Father perhaps would never come to the knowledge of his caſe; or if he did, would be ſo much diſturbed at it, as he imagined: that a man of his temper, fond of vain expences, and jovial company, puffed with pride, and haughtineſs, and enſlaved to a Concubine, whom he kept in his houſe, would have but little concern for the diſtreſs of a Son. That he had ſhewn this already by experiments; for tho' he had once loved him with the utmoſt tenderneſs, and above all things in the world, yet all that love was extinguiſhed, upon his entrance into the monaſtery; which his Father declared to be a baſeneſs, unworthy of his Anceſtors, and diſgracefull to the ſplendor of his Family. It was probable therefore, that he would rejoice at his calamity, and think it a puniſhment of his diſobedience to him, in betaking himſelf to a way of life, from which he had labored ſo earneſtly to diſſuade him. —In ſhort the Summ of St. *Chryſoſtom*'s conſolation is this; *that the more* Stagirius *ſuffered in this conflict, the more aſſured he might be, that he was under the peculiar care of heaven*; *and that by finding no relief, either from the tombs of the Martyrs, which he had ſo often viſited, or from his long abode with thoſe holy Exorciſts, who had never failed of ſucceſs before, he had a clear demonſtration of God's particular regard for him*;

" of the greater generoſity of that age, to take God's word " without ſuch pledges [1].

From theſe teſtimonies, one would neceſſarily conclude, upon the authority of St. *Chryſoſtom*, that miracles were ceaſed in his days: yet in other parts of his works we find him in a different ſtory, and haranguing on the mighty wonders, which were performed among them every day, *by the reliques of the Martyrs, in caſting out Devils, curing all diſeaſes, and drawing whole Cities and people to their Sepulchers* [2]. He diſplays alſo the miraculous cures, wrought by the uſe *of conſecrated oil, and by the ſign of the Croſs:* which laſt he calls *a defence againſt all evil, and a medicine againſt all ſickneſs, and affirms it to have been miraculouſly impreſſed, in his own time, on people's garments* [3].

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him; who would never have hindered the effect of ſo much grace, nor expoſed his own ſervants to ſo much ſhame, if he had not known it conducive to the greater good and probation of Stagirius.

Such were the arts, by which the Saints of this fourth age were ſubjecting the world to the tyranny of ſuperſtition. Not content to make men Chriſtians, they could not reſt, till they had made them alſo Monks; till they had perſuaded them, that the onely way of ſerving God, was, by rendering themſelves uſeleſs to man; and of ſaving their ſouls, by doing miſchief to their bodies. By this ſenſeleſs cant, they made it their buſineſs, to gain the Mothers chiefly in the firſt place, and through them, their children: eſpecially thoſe of the rich and the great; without the leaſt regard to the will of their fathers, the diſtreſs of their families, the breach of filial duty, or the ruin which they wrought to the health, the fortunes, and the happineſs of thoſe, whom they inſnared. We find ſeveral other inſtances of this kind in the works of this ſame *Chryſoſtom,* concerning the heirs of rich families, ſtollen away from their fathers by the artifices of Monks, which, as he himſelf informs us, raiſed ſuch a clamor and indignation againſt the whole Monkiſh Order, among the generality of the better ſort, as tranſported them almoſt to madneſs; to ſee their children decoyed from them into a life, which they conſidered as utterly ſordid and deſpicable. It was for the ſake of appeaſing theſe clamors, that he compoſed his three books, *againſt the Oppugners of the Monkiſh life*; one of which is addreſſed *to the believing,* and another *to the unbelieving Fathers,* in order to convince them both, of the excellence of this divine *philoſophy,* as it was called, and of the happineſs accruing to their ſons, from their choice and purſuit of it.

[1] Vid. Oper. T. 5. p. 455, 271. it. T. 7. 375. E. 376. B. &c.

[2] Ibid. T. 3. p. 338, 339.

[3] Ibid. T. xi. p. 387. A it. T. 5. p. 271. D.

Auſtin.

St. *Auſtin* alſo, who lived at the ſame time, tho' in a different part of the world, takes notice of the ſame objection, made by the Sceptics, with which the Chriſtians were commonly urged in this age. "They aſk us, ſays he, *why are not* "*thoſe miracles performed now, which you declare to have been* "*wrought formerly?* I could tell them, that they were then "neceſſary, before the world believed, for this very purpoſe, "that the world might believe; but he, who ſtill requires "prodigies, that he may become a believer, is himſelf a great "prodigy, who does not believe now, when the world does "believe [1]." One would not imagine, that theſe words, which ſeem to imply a ceſſation of miracles, were the preface to an elaborate narrative and ſolemn atteſtation of great numbers of them, ſaid to have been wrought in theſe very times: which, if true, as they are here affirmed by St. *Auſtin* from his own knowledge, muſt have been more illuſtrious, both for the number and excellence of them, than all, which were wrought by the Apoſtles themſelves.

But before we deſcend to particulars, I cannot forbear obſerving, what this Father has delivered concerning the general ſtate and credit of them among the Chriſtians themſelves, at the very time, when they were wrought. He tells us then, "that tho' miracles were frequently wrought, either by the "*name of Jeſus, or by his Sacraments, or by the prayers or the* "*memorials of the Martyrs*; yet the fame of them was not ſo "illuſtrious, as of thoſe of the Apoſtles: ſince they were "ſcarce ever known to the whole City or place, where they "happened to be performed; but for the moſt part, to a very

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[1] Cur, inquiunt, nunc illa miracula, quæ prædicatis facta eſſe, non fiunt? poſſem quidem dicere, neceſſaria prius fuiſſe, quam crederet mundus, ad hoc, ut crederet mundus. Quiſquis adhuc prodigia, ut credat, inquirit, magnum eſt ipſe prodigium, qui, mundo credente, non credit. D. Civ. Dei. l. 22. c. 8.

" few onely; while all the reſt were utterly ignorant of them; " eſpecially if the city was large: and if ever they were told " abroad to other people, yet they were not recommended " with ſuch authority, as to be received without difficulty " and doubting, tho' reported by true believers, to true be- " lievers [1].

That he might put an end therefore to this ſtrange negligence of the Chriſtians, with regard to their own miracles, he took care, as oft as he heard of any miracle, " that the parties " concerned in it ſhould be examined, and a verbal proces, or " authentic narrative be drawn of the fact, which was after- " wards publicly read to the people. Yet all this caution, as " he ſays, was not ſufficient to make the miracles known, or at " all regarded: becauſe thoſe, who were preſent at the recital " of ſuch narratives, heard them but once, while the greater " part were abſent: and even thoſe, who heard them, retained " nothing, a few days after, of what they had heard, and " ſeldom or never took the pains, to tell it to any body elſe, " whom they knew to be abſent [2]." This account of the matter would be very ſurprizing, were it not explaned to us by the miracles themſelves; of which I have here added a few ſpecimens, whence we ſhall eaſily collect the reaſon of that coldneſs and indifference, which the people of thoſe days expreſſed towards them.

For inſtance, among many other ſtories of the ſame kind, he relates theſe, which follow: " a pious old Cobler of *Hippo*,

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[1] Nam etiam nunc fiunt miracula, in ejus nomine, ſive per ſacramenta ejus, ſive per orationes vel memorias Sanctorum ejus, ſed non eadem claritate illuſtrantur—— & quando alibi, aliiſque narrantur, non tanta ea commendat auctoritas, ut ſine difficultate, vel dubitatione credantur, quamvis Chriſtianis fidelibus a fidelibus indicentur. Ibid. § 1.

[2] Ut nec illi, qui adfuerunt, poſt aliquot dies, quod audierunt, mente retineant; & vix quiſquam reperiatur illorum, qui ei, quem non adfuiſſe cognoverit, indicet quod audivit. Ibid. § 21.

" where he himſelf was Biſhop, having loſt his old coat, and " wanting money to buy a new one, betook himſelf to *the* " *twenty Martyrs*, whoſe chappel or memorial was famous in " that city; where he prayed to them very earneſtly, that he " might be enabled by them to get ſome cloaths. Some young " Fellows, who overheard him, began to make ſport with " him, and purſued him with their ſcoffs, for begging money " to buy a coat. But as the old man walked away, without " minding them, he ſaw a large fiſh lie gaſping on the ſhore, " which he caught by the help of the young men, and ſold " to a Chriſtian Cook, for three hundred pence; and laying " out the money on wool, ſet his wife to work, to provide " cloaths for him: but the Cook, cutting open the fiſh, " found a gold ring alſo in the belly of it; which, out of " compaſſion to the poor man, and the terror alſo of religion, " he preſently carried to the Cobler, ſaying, *ſee here is the* " *cloathing, which the twenty Martyrs have given you* [1].

Hippo.

" There was one *Heſperius* likewiſe, as he tells us, a man " of Tribunician quality, whoſe country houſe near *Hippo* was " haunted by evil ſpirits, and his cattle alſo and ſervants " afflicted by them: upon which he ſent a meſſage to the " Prieſts at *Hippo*, when *Auſtin* happened to be abſent, that " ſome of them would come over to him, and drive the evil " Spirits away by their prayers. One of them accordingly " went, and offered *the ſacrifice of Chriſt's body* upon the ſpot, " praying at the ſame time, as fervently as he was able, " that this vexation might be removed; upon which by God's " mercy it inſtantly ceaſed [2].

Hesperius.

" The ſame *Heſperius* had received from a friend ſome *holy*

Holy Earth.

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[1] Ad viginti Martyres, quorum Memoria apud nos eſt celeberrima, clara voce, ut veſtiretur, oravit, &c. ib. § 9.

[2] Ib. §. 6.

“ *earth*, brought from *Jeruſalem*, where Chriſt roſe from his “ grave on the third day; which earth he hung up in his bed-“ chamber, to ſecure himſelf from the miſchief of thoſe evil “ ſpirits. But ſince his houſe was now cleared of them, he “ was conſidering, what he ſhould do with this earth, being “ unwilling, out of reverence to it, to keep it any longer in his “ bedchamber. It happened, that St. *Auſtin* and another “ Biſhop, called *Maximinus*, were then in the neighbourhood; “ ſo that *Heſperius* ſent them an invitation to come to his “ houſe; which they immediately accepted; and after he had “ acquainted them with the whole affair, he deſired, that *the* “ *ſacred earth* might be depoſited ſomewhere in the Ground, “ and an Oratory built over it, where the Chriſtians might “ aſſemble for the performance of divine ſervice: the two “ Biſhops had no objection, ſo that his Project was preſently “ executed. There was at the ſame place a country lad, “ afflicted with the palſy; who having heard what was done, “ begged of his parents, that they would carry him without “ delay to that holy place, whither as ſoon as he was brought, “ he put up his prayers, and preſently returned back on foot “ in perfect health [1].”

Reliques of Stephen.

There are many more tales of this ſort, as contemptible, as any, in the Popiſh legends, and all atteſted by this celebrated Father, from his own knowledge: yet theſe are nothing to the extravagant things, which he goes on to relate, of *the reliques of the Martyr* Stephen. For as *reliques* were now become the moſt precious treaſure of the Church, ſo theſe of St. *Stephen*, after they had lain buried and unknown for near four centuries, were reveled in a viſion, to one *Lucianus* a Prieſt, *by* Gamaliel, *the celebrated Dr. of the law, at whoſe feet St.* Paul *had*

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[1] Ibid.

been bred, and being found by his direction, were removed with great ſolemnity and many miracles into *Jeruſalem* [1]. The fame of theſe reliques was ſoon ſpread through the Chriſtian world; and many little portions of them brought away by holy Pilgrims, to enrich the particular Churches of their own countries. For wherever any reliques were depoſited, an Oratory or Chappel was always built over them, which was called *a Memorial* of that Martyr, whoſe reliques it contained. Several reliques therefore of St. *Stephen* having been brought by different people into *Afric*, as many memorials of him were conſequently erected in different places, of which three were peculiarly famous, one at *Hippo*, where St. *Auſtin* was Biſhop, a ſecond at *Calama*; and a third at *Uzalis*, two other Epiſcopal Cities; and many great and illuſtrious miracles were continually wrought in them all.

St. *Auſtin* has given us a particular relation of ſome of them, by which *the gout, the ſtone, and fiſtula's* were inſtantly cured; *the blind reſtored to ſight*; *and five different perſons raiſed even from death to life*. Two of whom were *carried dead to the reliques, and brought back alive:* two more reſtored to life, by the virtue of *their garments onely*, which had touched the reliques; and a fifth, *by the oil of the martyr's lamps*. After all which wonderfull ſtories, he adds the following apology, not for telling us ſo many of them, but ſo few, out of the infinite number, which were publicly known and recorded.

" What ſhall I do? ſays he: I am engaged by promiſe, to
" finiſh the preſent work, ſo that it is not poſſible for me in

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[1] The hiſtory of this revelation of St. *Stephen*'s *reliques*, and of the miracles, which were wrought by them, is particularly delivered by ſeveral antient writers, whoſe pieces are annexed, as an Appendix to the ſeventh Volume of St. *Auſtin*. Edit. Benedict. And the ſame revelation is referred to likewiſe by St. *Auſtin* himſelf in different parts of his works.

" this place, to relate all the miracles, which I know; and " our people without doubt, when they read theſe, will be " grieved, that I have omitted ſo many, which they know to " be true, as well as I. But I beg them to excuſe me, and " to conſider what a tedious piece of work it would be, to do " that, which the nature of my argument does not oblige me " to do here. For were I to relate onely the miracles of cures, " without mentioning the reſt, which have been performed " by this Martyr, the moſt glorious *Stephen*, in the colony of " *Calama*, and in our own, it would fill a great number of " volumes. Nor would it be poſſible to collect them all, but " ſuch of them onely, of which certificates have been made, " and read to the people. For this I ordered to be done, " when I ſaw the effects of the divine powers, like to thoſe of " the antients, ſo frequently exerted alſo in our own times, " which ought not to be loſt from the notice of the multitude. " It is not yet two years, ſince this Memorial was founded at " *Hippo*, and tho' I am certain, that no account was taken " of many of the miracles, yet at the time, when I wrote " this, the number of certificates publicly made, amounted " to near ſeventy: but at *Calama*, where the Memorial is of " longer ſtanding, and certificates more frequently taken, " they reach to a far greater number.

" At *Uzalis* alſo, we know many eminent miracles wrought " by the ſame Martyr; whoſe Memorial was inſtituted there " by their Biſhop *Evodius*, much earlier than with us. But " it is not the cuſtom with them to take certificates, or it was " not rather, becauſe now it is probably begun. For when I " was lately there, I exhorted *Petronia*, a celebrated Matron, " who had been miraculouſly cured of a great and lingering " illneſs, in which the Phyſicians were not able to help her,

" to get a certificate drawn of the caſe, and read publicly to " the people, to which, by the advice alſo of the ſaid Biſhop " of the place, ſhe willingly conſented, and inſerted in it another miracle, which notwithſtanding the haſt, that I am in, " to put an end to this work, I cannot forbear relating, " &c [1].

I have dwelt the longer on theſe miracles, than the importance of them perhaps may be thought to require: but they are ſo preciſely deſcribed and authentically atteſted by one of the moſt venerable Fathers in all antiquity, who affirms them to have been wrought within his own knowledge, and under his own eyes, that they ſeem of all others the beſt adapted, to evince the truth of what I have been advancing, and to illuſtrate the real character of all the other miracles of the primitive times, both before and after them. Dr. *Chapman* however, ſpeaking of the very ſame miracles, roundly declares them all, *to be ſo ſtrongly atteſted, both by the effects, and the relators of them, that to doubt their reality, were to doubt the evidence of ſenſe* [2]. On theſe then, I am content to reſt the fate of my whole argument; and if either Dr. *Chapman* or Dr. *Berriman* can maintain theſe miracles to be credible, ſhall no longer diſpute the credibility of any, from the Apoſtolic times, down to our own. But, on the other hand, if miracles ſo ſtrictly examined by a moſt Holy Biſhop, confirmed by the certificates of eye-witneſſes, and rehearſed publicly to the people, at the time when they are ſaid to have been wrought cannot command our belief, theſe Doctors muſt needs confeſs, nay, they have already confeſſed, that the Chriſtian Church can ſhew no other, except thoſe of Chriſt, and his Apoſtles, which can make any better pretenſions to it.

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[1] De Civ. Dei. l. 22. c. 8. § 20, 21.

[2] Miſcell. Tracts, p. 174.

For not to inſiſt on the objections, which might reaſonably be made to the probability of the facts themſelves; to the incompetency of the inſtruments, by which, and of the ends, for which they are ſaid to have been performed; to the credulity of a prejudiced, or the fidelity rather of an artfull and intereſted relator; it ſeems evident, from the neglect, with which they were treated by the Chriſtians themſelves; from the obſcurity in which they lay; from the diligence of St. *Auſtin*, to ſearch them out; to get certificates of them; and to publiſh them to the people; and from the inſufficiency of all his pains, to make them ſtill regarded or at all remembered; that the people themſelves ſaw or ſuſpected the cheat, and were tired with the repeated frauds of this kind, which their Biſhops were impoſing upon them. For it is not poſſible to conceive any other reaſon of ſo ſurprizing a coldneſs, in a caſe of all others the moſt warming, but a general perſuaſion, grounded on experience, that theſe pretended miracles were nothing elſe but forgeries, contrived to enforce ſome favorite doctrine or rite, which the rulers of the Church were deſirous to eſtabliſh.

Yet theſe are not the ſtories, which chiefly ſhock Mr. *Dodwell*, and oblige him to reject the miracles of the fourth Century; but others ſtill more extravagant, tho' atteſted likewiſe by perſons of equal eminence and authority; by St. *Athanaſius*, St. *Gregory* of *Nyſſa*, St. *Jerom*, St. *Epiphanius*, &c. Of which therefore, it will be neceſſary to add a ſpecimen or two, from each of thoſe Fathers.

Athanasius.

St. *Athanaſius*, in the Preface to his life of St. *Antony* the Monk, declares, "that he had inſerted nothing in it, but what "he either knew to be true, having often ſeen the Saint him"ſelf, or what he had learnt from one, who had long mini-

" ſtered to him, and poured water upon his hands [1]." In this life then, after a great number of monſtrous ſtories, concerning the perſonal conflicts, which this Saint continually ſuſtained with all the ſeveral Devils, and powers of Hell, who aſſaulted him in every ſhape, which could imprint terror; and exerted every art and even corporal puniſhments, to drive him from the Monaſtic life, which threatened the ſpeedy ruin of their Kingdom, he tells us; " that ſome body knocking one " day at his Cell, *Antony* went to the door, where he ſaw a tall " meager perſon, who being aſked his name, anſwered, *that* " *he was Satan.*——His buſineſs, it ſeems, was, to beg a truce " of the Saint, and to expoſtulate with him, on account of " the perpetual reproaches and curſes, which the Monks ſo " undeſervedly beſtowed upon him, when he was no longer " in condition to give them any trouble: for ſince the deſert " was now filled with Monks, and the Chriſtians ſpread into " all places, he was diſarmed of all power to do them any " miſchief: ſo that the Chriſtians had nothing more to do, " but to take care of themſelves, and to forbear their needleſs " curſes againſt him [2]." The reſt of this piece is filled with many other miracles of the ſame ſtamp, too trifling to deſerve any regard.

Antony

St. *Gregory* of *Nyſſa*, in the life of his Nameſake, called the Wonder-worker, has this ſtory, " that the *Virgin Mary*, " accompanied by St. *John* the Evangeliſt, appeared to *Gregory* " in a viſion, and explaned to him the myſtery of Godlineſs, " in a ſhort Creed or divine ſummary of faith, which he took " down in writing, as they dictated it to him, and left the

Gregory.

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[1] Διὰ τοῦτο ἅπερ αὐτὸς τὲ γινώσκω (πολλάκις γὰρ αὐτὸν ἑώρακα) ϗ ἃ μαθεῖν ἠδυνήθην παρὰ τοῦ ἀκολουθήσαντος αὐτῷ χρόνον οὐκ ὀλίγον—γράψαι τῇ εὐλαβείᾳ ὑμῶν ἐσπούδασα. Oper. T. 2. p. 451. Edit. Par.

[2] Ibid. p. 476.

“ copy of it, a legacy to the Church of *Neocæſarea*, of which he was Biſhop: and if any one, ſays he, has a mind to be ſatisfied of the truth of this, let him inquire of that Church, in which the very words, as they were written by his bleſſed hand, are preſerved to this day: which, for the excellency of the divine grace, may be compared with thoſe tables of the law, made by God and delivered to *Moſes* [1].

Waterland

Dr. *Waterland* has given us a tranſlation of this Creed, and Dr. *Berriman*, an abſtract of it; which is *as expreſs as poſſible*, they ſay, *for the doctrine of the Trinity, as it was taught afterwards by* Athanaſius. They both however intimate, that the genuineneſs of the Creed had been called in quæſtion, tho' without any ſufficient cauſe [2]. Yet the learned *Cave*, who for zeal, and orthodoxy, and facility of believing, was ſcarce inferior to any, declares, *that notwithſtanding the authority of* Gregory Nyſſen, *who was apt to be too credulous, this ſhort expoſition of the Chriſtian faith will hardly find credit with prudent and ſenſible men* [3]. But whatever may be alledged to perſuade us, that this Creed was actually profeſſed and taught by *Gregory*, in his Church of *Neocæſarea*, yet no man ſurely but Dr. *Berriman*, could have any ſcruple to own, that the ſtory of the viſion, and of it's delivery to him from heaven, was a forgery, contrived to ſupport the *Athanaſian doctrine*, at a time when it was warmly controverted, and in danger of being ſuppreſſed. But as the revelation of it, if admitted to be true, would put an end at once to all diſpute, and give a divine Sanction to the Doctrine itſelf, ſo the Dr. ſeems reſolved not to part with it: for in his *Hiſtorical account of the Trinitarian controverſy*, ſpeaking on this very point, he ſays; " there are many arguments to convince " us of the genuineneſs and authority of this Creed of St. *Gregory:* I do not mean of it's being taught him by revelation, " (*tho' that may be well atteſted too, and will not ſeem incredible to* " *thoſe, who ſhall conſider, how highly this great perſon was diſtinguiſhed by the chariſmata, or extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghoſt)* " but I mean, as to the certainty, of it's having been taught " by St. *Gregory, &c.* [1]." From which we ſee, that tho' his ſole buſineſs in this place was, to prove the Creed to have been really *Gregory*'s, yet he could not forbear to acquaint us, that, if there was occaſion, he could prove *the revelation* alſo to be genuin: ſince it cannot enter into his head, how any one ſhould think it incredible, that, in thoſe miraculous ages, a perſon of *Gregory*'s exalted character might be favored with a viſit from heaven, by the *Virgin Mary* and St. *John the Apoſtle.*

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[1] Vid. Greg. Nyſſ. Vit. S. Greg. Thaumaturg. p. 978. Op. T. 2. Ed. Par.

[2] See Waterland. Import. of the Doct. of the Trin. p. 232. And Berrim. Hiſtoric. Acc. of the Trinitar. Controverſ. p. 138, 141.

[3] Vid. Hiſtor. Litterar. In Vita Greg. Thaumaturgi. p. 132.

The ſame *Gregory* of *Nyſſa* relates likewiſe, " how his Name-" ſake, being upon a journey, was forced one night, to take " ſhelter in an Heathen Temple, famed for an Oracle and " divination; where the Dæmons uſed to appear viſibly and " offer themſelves to the Prieſts. But the holy Father, by " invoking the name of *Jeſus*, put them all to flight; and by " making the Sign of the Croſs, purified the air, polluted by " the ſteam of their ſacrifices——the next morning when the " Prieſt came to perform his uſual functions; the Devils " appeared, and acquainted him, that they had been driven " out the night before by a ſtranger, and had not the power " to return: nor was he able to recall them by all the charms " of his expiatory ſacrifices. Upon this, the Prieſt purſued " *Gregory* in great wrath, and overtaking him on the road,

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[1] Berrim. Ibid. p. 138.

" threatened him moſt terribly, for what he had done. But " *Gregory*, deſpiſing his threats, gave him to underſtand, " that he had a power ſuperior to that of Devils, and could " drive them whitherſoever he pleaſed. The Prieſt amazed at " what he ſaid, began to beg, that for a proof of his power, " he would fetch them back again into the Temple; to which " *Gregory* conſenting, wrote this ſhort note onely, upon a " Schedule of paper, *Gregory to Satan, Enter.* With this, the " Prieſt was diſmiſſed; and laying the little Schedule upon the " Altar, brought the Devils back again immediaely to their old Seats." The miracle however had the good effect of converting the Pagan Prieſt [1].

Hillarion

Jerom.

I have already given a paſſage from the Life of St. *Hilarion* " the Monk, written by St. *Jerom*, as a ſpecimen of the fidelity of the writer.——But for a proof of the fabulous genius " of the fourth century, Mr. *Dodwell* refers us to another Life " of *the Hermit Paul,* compiled by the ſame Father, which is " filled with ſtories ſtill more monſtrous; " of *Satyrs and Fauns* " preſenting themſelves to the Hermit, and confeſſing their " own mortality, and the folly of the Gentiles in paying them " any worſhip, and begging his recommendation of them to " their common Lord, who came to ſave the world: of a raven " bringing half a loaf for ſixty years ſucceſſively to the Hermit, for his dayly food in the wilderneſs; and then a whole " loaf, when St. *Antony* came to viſit him: of two Lions, coming " to aſſiſt *Antony* in the burial of *Paul,* by digging a grave for " him with their feet, and then departing with the bleſſing of " *Antony* [2]."

Paul the Hermit

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[1] Vid. Greg. Nyſſ. ibid. p. 981.

[1] Hieron. Vit. Pauli Eremit. Oper. Tom. 4. par. 2. pag. 71. Edit. Benedict.

St. *Epiphanius*, Biſhop of *Salamis* in *Cyprus*, who is ſaid to have wrought miracles himſelf, both in his life-time and after it [1], affirms ſeveral falſe and abſurd miracles from his own knowledge, which his advocates gently paſs over, by remarking onely, that *this moſt holy Father was too credulous*, or *not ſo accurate*, as we could wiſh [2]. He declares, " that in imitation of our Saviour's miracle at *Cana* in *Galilee*, ſeveral fountains and rivers in his days " were annually turned into wine. A fountain of *Cibyra* a City " of *Caria*, ſays he, and another at *Geraſa* in *Arabia*, prove the " truth of this. I myſelf have drunk out of the fountain of *Cibyra*, and my brethren, out of the other at *Geraſa:* and many " teſtify the ſame thing of the river *Nile* in *Ægypt* [3]." Should we then be aſked here, as we were before in a ſimilar caſe; *will ye not believe a moſt holy Biſhop, in a fact atteſted by his own ſenſes?* the anſwer is clear and ſhort; *the fact is not credible.*

Epiphanius

Fountains of Wine

St. *Chryſoſtom*, celebrating the acts of the Martyr St. *Babylas*, Biſhop of *Antioch*, ſays: " the Gentiles will laugh, to hear me " talk of the acts of perſons dead, and buried, and conſumed " to duſt; but they are not to imagine, that the bodies of " Martyrs, like to thoſe of common men, are left deſtitute of all " active force and energy, ſince a greater power than that of " the human ſoul is ſuperadded to them, the power of the Holy " Spirit; which, by working miracles in them, demonſtrates " the truth of the reſurrection."——He then procedes to inform us, " how the remains of this Martyr were removed

Chrisostom

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[1] Vid. Vit. Epiphan. c. 37, 66, &c. Op. Tom. 2. p. 350. Edit. Par.

[2] Quæ de Melchiſedeci parentibus narrat *Epiphanius*, redolent apocryphorum ſomnia, cujuſmodi multa ſunt in hoc opere bona fide a Sanctiſſimo Patre deſcripta. Petav. Not. in pag. 217. Tom. 2.

Majori fide digna, quam quæ habet alia pleraque Pater ille parum accuratus. Dodw. Diſſer. Iren. 2. § 29.

[3] Πεπώκαμεν ἀπὸ τῆς Κιβύρης, ἡμέτεροι δὲ ἀδελφοὶ ἀπὸ τῆς ἐν Γεράσῃ πηγῆς—— ϗ πολλοὶ δὲ ϗ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ περὶ τοῦ Νείλου τοῦτο μαρτυροῦσι. Adv. Hæreſ. l. 2. cxxx. p. 451. Tom. 1.

" by a certain Emperor, out of the City of *Antioch*, into a " ſuburb of it, called *Daphne*, famous for the delights of it's " ſituation, and the variety of pleaſures, which it afforded " to it's inhabitants, as well as for a celebrated Temple and " *Oracle of Apollo Daphneus*; to which the body of the Saint " was thought proper to be removed, for the ſake of giving " ſome check to the lewdneſs and licentiouſneſs, that reigned " in the place. The Coffin therefore was no ſooner depoſited " in a chappel provided for it, than the Oracle of *Apollo* was " ſtruck dumb at once: ſo that when *Julian* the Apoſtate " came afterwards to conſult it, he could receive no other " anſwer from *Apollo*, *but that the dead would not ſuffer him to* " *ſpeak any longer* [1]. Wherefore *Julian* commanded the bones " of St. *Babylas* to be conveyed back again into *Antioch*; but " in the very moment, when they entered into the City, the " Statue of the God, and the roof of his Temple were deſtroyed " by lightning, upon the interceſſion of the Saint [2]." St. *Chryſoſtom* employs an intire Homily, and a larger diſcourſe, which follows it, in haranguing on this ſame ſubject of *Babylas*; and on the bleſſings and dayly miracles, wrought by the reliques of the Martyrs, to the edification of the Church, and the confuſion of unbelievers [3]. Yet his Hiſtory of this Saint is ſo evidently fabulous and romantic, that the *Benedictin Monks*, who publiſhed the laſt and beſt edition of his works, found it neceſſary to admoniſh the reader, *that it is written in a declamatory ſtile, overflowing with rhetorical figures, and for the*

Babylas

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[1] " By which anſwer we may under- " ſtand, ſays Sir *Iſ. Newton*, that ſome " Chriſtian was got into the place, where " the Heathen Prieſts uſed to ſpeak " through a pipe in delivering their Ora- " cles." See Obſervat on the Prophecies of *Daniel*, par. 1. p. 210.

[2] Καὶ ὅτι οὐκ ἁπλῶς κομπάζων ταῦτα λέγω νῦν——ἵκανα μὲν τὸν λόγον πιστώσασθαι, καὶ τὰ καθ᾽ ἑκάστην ἡμέραν ὑπὸ τῶν Μαρτύρων γινόμενα θαύματα. Ibid. p. 555.

[3] Vid. Oper. Tom. 2. p. 531, 533, 534, 564, &c.

I *moſt*

moſt part deſtitute of truth [1]. In which thoſe learned Papiſts have ſhewn more candor as well as judgement, than our Proteſtant Doctor *Cave*; who, in his Life of the ſame *Babylas*, after relating the particular ſtory juſt deſcribed, which he calls *one of the moſt memorable occurrences, that Church antiquity has conveyed to us*, adds the following atteſtation to it.

Cave.

" The reader, 'tis like, may be apt to ſcruple this ſtory, as " favouring a little of ſuperſtition, and giving too much " honor to the reliques of ſaints. To which I ſhall ſay no " more, than that the credit of it ſeems unquæſtionable; " it being reported not onely by *Socrates*, *Sozomen*, and *Theodoret*, who all lived very near that time, but by *Chryſoſtom*, " who was born at *Antioch*, and was a long time Preſbyter " of that Church, and was ſcholar there to *Libanius* the Sophiſt, at the very time when the thing was done, and an " eye-witneſs of it; and who not onely preached the thing, " but wrote a diſcourſe againſt the Gentiles on this very ſubject; where he appeals to the knowledge both of young and " old then alive, who had ſeen it, and challenges them to ſtand " up and contradict, if they could, the truth of what he related. Nay, which farther puts the caſe paſt all peradventure, *Libanius* the Orator evidently confeſſes it, &c. [2]: Whereas all, which that Orator confeſſes, and which the Benedictins allow to be well grounded in the whole relation is, that the reliques of *Babylas* were carried back again, by *Julian*'s order, out of *Daphne* into the City; and that the Temple of the *Daphnean Apollo* was ſoon after deſtroyed in the night by fire; which the Chriſtians declared to have been ſent from heaven by the power of the Saint; and the Heathens aſcribed to the revenge and contrivance of the Chriſtians [1].

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[1] Argumentum libri, eſt hiſtoria Martyrii S. Babylæ—declamatorio more narrata, tropiſque redundans; in qua plerumque veritatem deſideres. Admonit. in Serm. ibid. p. 530.

[2] See his Lives of the Prim. Fathers. Liſe of Babyl. Vol. I. p. 247.

A Popiſh writer, with whom I have been engaged, in order to reprove my raillery on their fictitious Saints and Image-worſhip, has alledged alſo a moſt notable miracle, from this fourth century; which I ſhall here add to the Specimens already given.

" When *Julian* the *Apoſtate* was purſuing his *Perſian* expedi-
" tion, and at the very time, when he is ſuppoſed to have been
" deſtroyed by the immediate hand of God, the Great St. *Baſil*
" was ſtanding before the *Image of the Bleſſed Virgin*, on which
" there was painted likewiſe the figure of St. *Mercurius*, an
" eminent Martyr: and while St. *Baſil* was fervently praying,
" that the impious and atheiſtical *Julian* might be cut off, he
" received this revelation from the picture; out of which, the
" figure of the Martyr quite vaniſhed for a little while, but
" preſently appeared again, and held out *a bloody ſpear:* as
" a token of what had happened in the ſame moment to *Ju-*
" *lian* [2]."

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[1] *Julian* ſuſpected the Chriſtians to have ſet fire to this Temple, on the account of his removal of the body of St. *Babylas:* for which reaſon, he ordered ſome of them to be put to the rack, and their great Church in *Antioch* to be ſhut up; as we are told by *Ammianus Marcellinus*; who mentions another report alſo, tho' more ſlightly grounded, of a different cauſe of that accident. [l. 22. c. 13. Vid. it. Julian. Miſopogon. Oper. T. 1. p. 361. Edit. Spanh. 1696.] The Chriſtians, ſays Sozomen, took the fire to be ſent from heaven at the requeſt of the Martyr, but the Gentiles look upon it as the act of the Chriſtians, lib. 5. c. xx.

[2] Ἐξ ἧς εἰκόνος ἐμυήθη ταύτην τὴν ἀποκάλυψιν. ἑώρα γὰρ πρὸς μὲν βραχὺ ἀφανῆ τὸν μάρτυρα, μετ' οὐ πολὺ δὲ, τὸ δόρυ ᾑμαγμένον κατέχοντα, Joh. Damaſcen. Oper. T. 1. p. 327. E. Edit. Par. pr. Lequien.

N. B. This ſtory is ſaid to have been recorded by *Helladius*, the diſciple and ſucceſſor of St. *Baſil*, in the Biſhoprick of *Cæſarea*, in the Life, which he wrote of St. *Baſil*.

But *Julian*'s death was foretold likewiſe by *viſions*, and *divine revelations*, as the Eccleſiaſtical writers inform us, to ſeveral other Saints and holy men, in different parts of the world, who were ſeverally addreſſing their prayers to God for his deſtruction [1]. Whence we cannot but obſerve, what a total change there was, both of principles and practice, between the Fathers of the fourth, and thoſe of the preceding ages; or between the Church when perſecuted, and when eſtabliſhed in power and authority. For in the earlier times, under the very worſt of the Heathen Emperors, and the cruelleſt perſecutors of the Church, when the Chriſtians were treated every where, as traitors to the government, all their Apologiſts, through the three firſt centuries, declare with one voice, that they were obliged by the precepts of their religion, to be of all men the moſt loyal to their Princes, and that it was their dayly practice, to put up their united prayers for their proſperity. We pray, ſays *Tertullian*, *for every Emperor*; *that he may have a long life*, *ſecure reign*, *a ſafe houſe*, *ſtrong armies*, *faithfull Senate*, *honeſt people*, *a quiet world*, *and whatſoever elſe*, *man*, *or Cæſar himſelf can wiſh* [2]. Yet after the Church had gained a firm eſtabliſhment, it's temper was quite altered; and the Emperors no ſooner began to give them any diſturbance, than their prayers were turned into curſes; and the divine vengeance confeſſedly implored to deſtroy them. So true it is, what all the Popiſh writers have not ſcrupled to affirm, from *Pope Gregory the Great*, down to *Cardinal*

curius

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[1] Vid. Sozom. lib. 6. c. 2.

[1] Ὅθεν Θεὸν μὲν μόνον προσκυνοῦμεν, ὑμῖν δὲ πρὸς τὰ ἄλλα χαίροντες ὑπηρετοῦμεν καὶ εὐχόμενοι μετὰ τῆς βασιλικῆς δυνάμεως καὶ σώφρονα τὸν λογισμὸν ἔχοντας ὑμᾶς εὑρεθῆναι. Juſt. Martyr. Apol. 1. p. 26.

Oramus pro omnibus Imperatoribus, vitam illis prolixam, imperium ſecurum —& quæcunque hominis & Cæſaris vota ſunt. Apolog. § 30.

Deprecamur diebus ac noctibus & pro ſalute populi, & pro ſtatu Imperatorum veſtrorum. Vid. Act. Paſſion. Cyprian. apud Cyprian. p. 16. Edit. Rigaltii.

dinal Bellarmine, that it was not the want of will, but of the power onely to rebel, which made the primitive Chriſtians ſo patient under the perſecuting Emperors, and particularly under Julian, becauſe the Church had not yet acquired ſtrength enough, to controul the Princes of the earth [1].

Now it is agreed by all, that theſe Fathers, whoſe teſtimonies I have juſt been reciting, were the moſt eminent lights of the fourth century; all of them ſainted by the Catholic Church; and highly reverenced at this day in all Churches, for their piety, probity and learning: yet from the ſpecimens of them above given, it is evident, that they would not ſcruple, to propagate any fiction, how groſs ſoever, which ſerved to promote the intereſt either of Chriſtianity in general, or of any particular rite or doctrine, which they were deſirous to recommend. St. *Jerom* in effect confeſſes it; for after the mention of a ſilly ſtory, concerning the Chriſtians of *Jeruſalem*, who uſed to ſhew, in the ruins of the Temple, *certain ſtones of reddiſh color*, which they pretended to have been ſtained by the blood of *Zacharias the Son of Barachias, who was ſlain between the Temple and the Altar*, he adds, *but I do not find fault with an error, which flows from an hatred of the Jews, and a pious zeal for the Chriſtian faith* [2].

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[2] See Chillingworth's Works, 7th Edit. p. 283. & Not. *.

[2] Non condemnamus errorem, qui de odio Judæorum & fidei pietate deſcendit. Oper. T. 4. p. 113.

What a Confession!

N. B. The ſame *Jerom* ſpeaking, in another place, of the different manner, which writers found themſelves obliged to uſe, in their controverſial and their dogmatical writings, intimates, that in controverſy, whoſe end was victory rather than truth, it was allowable, to employ every artifice, which would beſt ſerve to conquer an adverſary: in proof of which, " *Origen*, ſays he, *Methodius*, *Euſebius*, " *Apollinaris*, have written many thou" ſands of lines, againſt *Celſus* and *Por-* " *phyry:* conſider with what arguments " and what ſlippery problems, they baffle " what was contrived againſt them by the " Spirit of the Devil: and becauſe they " are ſometimes forced to ſpeak; they " ſpeak not what they think, but what is " neceſſary againſt thoſe, who are called

" Gentiles.

If the miracles then of the fourth century, ſo ſolemnly atteſted by the moſt celebrated and revered Fathers of the Church, are to be rejected after all as fabulous, it muſt needs give a fatal blow to the credit of all the miracles even of the preceding centuries; ſince there is not a ſingle Father, whom I have mentioned in this fourth age, who for zeal and piety, may not be compared with the beſt of the more ancient, and for knowledge and learning, be preferred to them all. For inſtance, there was not a perſon in all the primitive Church, more highly reſpected in his own days, than St. *Epiphanius*, for the purity of his life, as well as the extent of his learning. He was a Maſter of *five languages*, and has left behind him one of the moſt uſefull works, which remain to us from antiquity. St. *Jerom*, who perſonally knew him, calls him, *the Father of all Biſhops, and a ſhining Star among them*; *the pattern of antient ſanctity*; *the man of God of bleſſed memory*; *to whom the people uſed to flock in crouds, offering their little children to his benediction*; *kiſſing his feet*; *and catching the hem of his garment* [1].

All the reſt were men of the ſame character, who ſpent their lives and ſtudies in propagating the faith, and in combating the vices and hæreſies of their times. Yet none of them have ſcrupled, we ſee, to pledge their faith for the truth of facts, which no man of ſenſe can believe, and which their warmeſt admirers are forced to give up as fabulous. If ſuch perſons then could willfully attempt to deceive; and if the ſanctity of their characters cannot aſſure us of their fidelity; what better ſecurity can we have from thoſe, who lived before them? or

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" Gentiles. I do not mention the latin writers, *Tertullian*, *Cyprian*, *Minutius*, *Victorinus*, *Lactantius*, *Hilarius*, leſt I be thought, " not ſo much to be defending myſelf, as " accuſing others, Op. T. 4. p. 236.

[1] Oper. Tom. 4. par. 2. p. 312, 313, 417, 443, 727.

what cure for our Scepticiſm, with regard to any of the miracles above mentioned? was the firſt Aſſertor of them, *Juſtin Martyr*, more pious, cautious, learned, judicious, or leſs credulous than *Epiphanius?* or were thoſe virtues more conſpicuous in *Irenæus*, *Tertullian*, *Cyprian*, *Arnobius*, and *Lactantius*, than in *Athanaſius*, *Gregory*, *Chryſoſtom*, *Jerom*, *Auſtin?* No body, I dare ſay, will venture to affirm it. If theſe later Fathers then, biaſſed by a falſe zeal or intereſt, could be tempted to propagate a known lie; or with all their learning and knowledge, could be ſo weakly credulous, as to believe the abſurd ſtories, which they themſelves atteſt; there muſt always be reaſon to ſuſpect, that the ſame prejudices would operate even more ſtrongly in the earlier Fathers; prompted by the ſame zeal and the ſame intereſts, yet indued with leſs learning, leſs judgement, and more credulity.

But whatever light the fourth Century may give us, in diſcovering the real character of the earlier ages, it affords us at leaſt a ſure preſage, of what we are to expect from the fifth, into which we are now entering. Dr. *Waterland* himſelf allows, on the authority of *Nazianzen*, *that the ſtate of the Church towards the end of the fourth century was become very corrupt* [1]: for that reaſon, as we have elſewhere ſeen, he durſt not venture to appeal, in the caſe of it's miracles, to any of the celebrated Fathers above mentioned, as being evidently infected with that corruption. The learned *Moſheim* alſo, a foreign Divine, and zealous advocate of Chriſtianity, who, by his writings againſt the Freethinkers, as Dr. *Chapman* tells us, *has deſerved the eſteem of all good and learned men*, intimates his fears, " that thoſe, who " ſearch with any attention into the writings of the greateſt

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[1] Import. of the Doct. of the Trin. p. 424.

" and moſt holy Doctors of the fourth century, will find them " all without exception, diſpoſed *to deceive and to lie,* whenever " the intereſt of religion requires it [1]." Since the degeneracy therefore of this age has obliged the moſt devoted admirers of antiquity, not onely to ſuſpect, but to reject it's miracles as ſpurious, we cannot be at a loſs, what judgement we ought to form on the miracles of the following age, which is allowed by all to have been ſtill more corrupt.

The ſucceding Fathers however go on ſtill as before, to aſſert the ſame miraculous gifts, and even more of them to the fifth, than to any of the preceding ages. Whence a certain infidel writer has taken occaſion to cenſure the credit of Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, as being *full of miracles, wrought by ſuch madmen, as* Symeon Stylites [2], a Monk of the fifth century; who ſpent the greateſt part of his life on the top of a pillar, from which he drew his ſurname; and whoſe wonderfull acts are particularly related by *Theodoret*. Now whether this *Symeon* was a madman or not, the credit of Chriſtianity is no way affected by it. The Hiſtory of the Goſpel, I hope may be true, though the Hiſtory of the Church be fabulous. And if the eccleſiaſtic Hiſtorians have recorded many ſilly fictions, under the name of miracles, as they undoubtedly have, the blame muſt be charged to the writers, not to their religion. But the cenſure came from an Infidel, and for that reaſon, was at all events to be confuted; ſince to allow a grain of truth to one of that claſs, is to betray the cauſe of Chriſtianity, and to ſtrengthen the hands of it's enemies.

Theodoret

This is the principle, which generally animates the zeal, and glares through the writings of the modern advocates of our religion:

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[1] See Dr. Chapm. Miſcellan. Tracts, p. 191, 207.

[2] See Chriſtianity as old as the Creat. c. 8. p. 89.

ligion: and which in reality, has done more hurt and diſcredit to it, than all the attacks of it's open adverſaries: and it was the ſame principle without doubt, that gave birth to the defence of *Symeon Stylites*, which Dr. *Chapman*, in his remarks on the Author referred to, has thought fit to attempt in the following words;

Chapmans defence of Stylites's Miracles.

" I know our Author too well, to take his judgement either
" of madneſs or ſenſe. 'Tis more than probable, that it is
" madneſs with him, to believe any miracles at all, of any
" perſon, or at any time. So that we are not to wonder, if
" *Symeon* and his miracles have no ſort of credit with him. For
" this reaſon I addreſs myſelf here, not to him, but to thoſe, who
" diſtinguiſh between truth and impoſture, between clear and
" indiſputable evidence, and that which is dark and ſuſpicious.
" The great *Theodoret*, whoſe character for ſenſe, learning and piety,
" is abundantly known and confeſſed, was himſelf contemporary
" with *Symeon Stylites*, was perſonally and intimately acquaint-
" ed with him, converſed with him for many years together,
" and declares himſelf an eye-witneſs to the wonderfull things
" related of him. He has given us an account of a great part
" of his Life, which he wrote, while *Symeon* was yet alive, and
" appeals to all the world for the truth of what he ſays of him.
" He farther tells us, that *Symeon* by his miracles converted
" many thouſands of Pagans, eſpecially the *Iſhmaelites* or *Sara-*
" *cens*, to the Chriſtian religion; that he himſelf, at *Symeon*'s
" deſire, gave many of them the Sacerdotal benediction, and
" was in manifeſt danger of loſing his life, by the impatience
" and eagerneſs of the Barbarians to receive it from him. If
" we may not admit ſuch evidence as this in proof of a matter
" of fact, I am afraid, we muſt ſhake the evidence of all hu-
" man teſtimony, and believe nothing, but what we ſee, and

" feel, and know ourſelves. Nay farther, our Author cannot " prove, that there ever exiſted ſuch a man as *Symeon Stylites*, " by better evidence, than that, which I have produced, to " prove his miracles [1]."

Here we ſee what a ſort of character and language is prepared for thoſe, who dare to reject the miracles of *Symeon*. They muſt be men, who *know not how to diſtinguiſh between truth and impoſture*; *between indiſputable and ſuſpicious evidence*; *who ſhake the credit of all human teſtimony*, *and believe nothing*, *but what they ſee themſelves.* And all this aſſurance is grounded on the ſingle teſtimony of *Theodoret*, to whom, in order to enhance his authority, he has added, according to his uſual way, the title of *the Great*. But as the Doctor has carried his defence of Monks and their miracles much farther, than any other Proteſtant, I believe, would venture to do, ſo it was natural to ſuſpect, that he had been drawn into it by ſome Popiſh writer, of whom he had conceived a favorable opinion; and we find accordingly, that he has borrowed, not onely his notions, but his very expreſſions from Monſ. *Tillemont*, who talks in the ſame pompous ſtrain, of *Le Grand Theodoret*, *whoſe evidence cannot be ſlighted*, *he ſays*, *without ſhaking the credit of all human teſtimony* [2].

Tillemont

But let him borrow them from whomſoever he pleaſes; my buſineſs is, to inquire onely whether, what he has borrowed and ſo peremptorily affirmed, be true, or credible, or fit for a Proteſtant Divine, to impoſe upon the conſciences of Chriſtians. This therefore is the point, which I ſhall now procede to conſider, from the authority of thoſe very teſtimonies, to which he himſelf has referred us.

We are told then by *Theodoret*, " that this *Symeon* ſpent the " firſt part of his life in certain Monaſteries near *Antioch* in *Syria*,

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[1] See Miſcell. Tracts, p. 165.

[2] See Tillem. Mem. Vol. XV. p. 348.

" mortifying his body by horrible auſterities, not onely beyond " the rules of their ordinary diſcipline, but above the force even " of nature itſelf; till for his perſeverance in theſe extravagan- " cies, contrary to the Admonitions of his rulers, he was turn- " ed out of the ſociety, as giving an example, that might be " dangerous or fatal to thoſe, who attempted to imitate it. " Upon this he retired to a ſeparate Cave or Hut, where he " took a fancy, after the example of *Moſes* and *Elias*, to keep " a faſt and total abſtinence from food, for forty intire days. " But when another holy man called *Baſſus*, repreſented to " him the danger and even ſin of an attempt, which would pro- " bably deſtroy him, he complied ſo far, as to ſuffer ten loaves, " and a pitcher of water to be immured with him in his cell, " with a promiſe to make uſe of them, if he happened to want " any refreſhment. *Baſſus* then cloſed up his door with mud, " and left him for forty days; at the end of which, he returned, " and clearing away the mud from the door, found the ten " loaves intire, and the pitcher alſo full, but *Symeon* ſtretched " upon the ground, quite ſpiritleſs and unable to ſpeak or ſtir, " till by the care of his friend, and the application of the ſym- " bols of the holy myſteries, he was gradually reſtored to his " ſtrength and former health. From which time, as *Theodoret* " adds, he had then perſevered twenty eight years, in the ſame " practice of faſting forty days in each year. During the " firſt part of which days, he uſed conſtantly to ſtand: and " when through want of nouriſhment he grew too weak to " endure that poſture, he then began to ſit; but at the laſt, " was forced to lie down half dead and almoſt ſpent [1].

His next whim was, " to fix his perpetual ſtation on the top of " a pillar, whoſe circumference was hardly of two cubits; and

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[1] Vid. Theodoret. Religioſ. Hiſtor. p. 880. Oper. T. 3. Edit. Paris.

" after he had ſpent many years in that poſition, like a ſtatue " upon it's pedeſtal, on ſeveral different pillars, he mounted " one at laſt, thirty ſix cubits high, and lived thirty years upon it: being placed in the middle region, as it were, between heaven and earth; where he converſed with God, " and glorified him with Angels; offering up for the men on " earth his ſupplications to God, and drawing down from " heaven the bleſſings of God upon men [1]." But becauſe theſe pillars allowed no other poſture but that of ſtanding, he contrived a method, which enabled him to endure ſtill the fatigue of his uſual faſts. " For he got a beam fixed to the top of " his pillar, to which he tied himſelf, and by that ſupport held " out the whole forty days without changing his poſition; till " being ſtrengthened by heaven with a larger meaſure of grace, " he no longer wanted that help, but ſtood all the time, " without taſting the leaſt food, yet with eaſe and chearfulneſs [2].

The manner of paſſing his time on the pillar was this; " all " the nights and days alſo, till three in the afternoon, were " ſpent by him in prayer, in which he uſed continual bowings of his body, and always touched his very toes with his " head. For this, ſays *Theodoret*, was eaſy to him, becauſe " he made but one meal in the week, and that a very light " one, ſo that his belly being generally empty, gave him no " obſtruction in bending his back. One of thoſe who ſtood by, " looking upon him with *Theodoret*, had the curioſity to count " the number of his bowings, but when he had counted to " twelve hundred and forty four, he was tired and would " count them no longer [3]. On ſolemn Feſtivals, he ſtood

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[1] Ibid. p. 882.

[2] Ibid. 880.

[3] Ibid. 887. A.

" with his hands ſtretched out towards heaven, from the " ſetting of the Sun, to it's riſing, without a wink of ſleep the " whole night [1].

" From three in the afternoon it was his practice, to preach " and to give divine lectures; to anſwer all quæſtions and " petitions, which were offered to him; to cure diſeaſes, and " to compoſe differences; but at Sun-ſetting he began to con- " verſe again with God [2]. He wrought innumerable mira- " cles; giving health to the ſick, children to the barren; and " diſpenſing ſacred oil to thoſe likewiſe who deſired it [3]." To many of which miracles *Theodoret* declares himſelf to have been an eye-witneſs, as well as to his gift of prophecy, for he heard " him foretell a famine and a peſtilence, and an irrup- " tion of locuſts, and the death of one of *Theodoret*'s enemies, " fifteen days before it happened [4]. One of the miracles, " which *Theodoret* ſaw, was this; an eminent *Iſhmaelite* and " believer in Chriſt, made a vow to God in the preſence of " *Symeon*, that he would abſtain from all animal food during " the reſt of his life: but being tempted afterwards to break " his vow, he reſolved to eat a fowl, aud ordered it to be " dreſſed for him accordingly; but when he ſat down to eat, " he found the fleſh of it turned into ſtone. The Barbarian, " amazed at this miracle, ran away in all haſt to the Saint, " proclaming his ſecret crime to all people, and imploring the " Saint, by the omnipotence of his prayers, to releaſe him " from the bond of this ſin. There were many eye-witneſſes of " this miracle, who handled the fowl, and found the part " of it about the breaſt, to be compounded of bone and of " ſtone [5]."

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[1] Ibid. D.

[2] Ib. 888. B.

[3] Ib. 885, 886, &c.

[4] Ib. 885.

[5] Ib. B.

By theſe miracles and auſterities, the fame of *Symeon*, as *Theodoret* ſays, was ſpread through the whole world: ſo that people of all nations and languages flocked to him in crouds from the remoteſt parts of the earth; from *Spain* and *Gaul*, and even *Britain* itſelf; and his name was ſo celebrated at *Rome*, *that the Artificers of all kinds had little images of him, placed in the entrance of their ſhops, as a guard and ſecurity to them againſt all ſorts of miſchief* [1].

This is the account in ſhort of the Life of *Symeon Stylites:* the bare recital of which, tho' atteſted by ten *Theodorets*, muſt needs expoſe the abſurdity of believing, that it could in any manner be ſuggeſted or directed by divine inſpiration. Yet Dr. *Chapman* contends, *that there is no better evidence for the very exiſtence of* Symeon, *than we have for his miracles* [2]. By which he means, I ſuppoſe, that we have the ſame evidence for both; the teſtimony of the ſame *Theodoret*, which he imagines to be as good in the one caſe, as in the other: not reflecting, that the ſame witneſs, of whatever character he be, will neceſſarily find a very different degree of credit, according to the different nature of the facts, which he atteſts; and tho' credible in ſome, may be juſtly contemptible in others. For example, when we are told by *Theodoret*, and after him by *Evagrius*, that a certain Monk called *Symeon*, who was perſonally known to them, took a fancy to live upon a pillar, where he was ſeen every day by many thouſands; we have no reaſon to doubt of it; the thing was notorious, and there were many ſuch Enthuſiaſts in the ſame age; and every one of thoſe thouſands, who ſaw him, were as good witneſſes of it, as *Theodoret* himſelf. But when we are told by the ſame writers, that *Symeon was inſpired by God, and performed many*

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[1] 882. A. [2] Miſcell. Tracts, p. 167.

things above the force of human nature: this is a different caſe, which cannot command the ſame belief; being a matter of opinion, rather than of fact; of which very few could judge, fewer ſtill be certain, and ſcarce one perhaps of all the thouſands, who ſaw him, could be a competent witneſs: while the character of *Symeon* on the one ſide, and of *Theodoret* on the other, ſuggeſt many obvious reaſons againſt the credibility of it.

Veſpaſian's Miracle

To illuſtrate this more clearly by a ſimilar inſtance from profane hiſtory. Two claſſical writers of undoubted credit, *Suetonius* and *Tacitus*, have each written the Life and acts of the Emperor *Veſpaſian: who alone*, they ſay, *of all the Princes before him, was made a better man, by his advancement to the Empire* [1]. But the ſame writers alſo declare, that this good Emperor, *by a divine admonition from the God* Serapis, *publicly reſtored a blind man to his ſight, and a cripple to his limbs, in the view of the people of* Alexandria: *and that many years after his death, when there was no reward or temptation for telling ſuch a lie, ſeveral witneſſes were ſtill living, who had ſeen thoſe miracles performed, and bore teſtimony to the truth of them* [2]. Now it is certain, that no body in any age, ever doubted of the exiſtence of *Veſpaſian*, yet many probably in all, and every ſingle man in the preſent, not onely doubt, but reject the ſtory of his miracles: tho' theſe laſt be affirmed by the ſame writers, who aſſure us of the firſt: to whoſe authority ſtill we pay all the regard, that is due, by believing them in every thing, that is credi-

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Tacitus

[1] Soluſque omnium ante ſe Principum, in melius mutatus eſt. Tacit. Hiſt. l. 1. c. 50.

Suetonius.

[2] E plebe quidam luminibus orbatus, item alius debili crure, ſedentem pro tribunali pariter adierunt, orantes opem valetudinis, demonſtratam a *Serapide* per quietem. &c. Sueton. in Vit. c. 7.

Utrumque qui interfuere, nunc quoque memorant, poſtquam nullum mendacio pretium. Tacit. Hiſt. l. 4. c. 81.

ble; in every thing, of which they were competent witneſſes; and charging the abſurd and fabulous part, to the ſuperſtition, prejudices, and falſe principles, which prevailed in thoſe ages.

The caſe is the ſame with *Theodoret* and all the Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtorians, who have tranſmitted to us the Lives and miracles of the Monks, and other pious men of their own times. We take their word, as far as reaſon and religion will permit us; and aſcribe the reſt to the credulity, the prejudices, and erroneous principles, which infected all the writers of thoſe days. The Romaniſts indeed roundly embrace and eſpouſe all the abſurd and fictitious ſtories, which they have delivered to us; and are under a neceſſity of doing ſo, ſince they teach the ſame corrupt doctrines, retain the ſame ſuperſtitious rites, and exerciſe the ſame uſurped powers, for the ſake of which, thoſe very ſtories were originally forged. But no Proteſtants, as far as I have obſerved, except the two Doctors above mentioned, have ever attempted to defend either the miracles, or the principles of the fifth century; but on the contrary, have conſtantly ſignified either their ſuſpicion, or utter contempt of them.

Dodwell

Mr. *Dodwell*, whoſe piety and zeal for the honor of Chriſtianity were as conſpicuous as his learning, declares, "that "nothing does ſo much diſcredit to the cauſe of miracles in "general, among the Infidels and Atheiſts, as the impoſtures "of the later ages; meaning the fourth, fifth, and following "centuries. Theſe, ſays he, they oppoſe to the undoubted "credit of the earlier ages; and becauſe theſe falſe prodigies "deceived the whole world, they infer, that the ancient ones "likewiſe, tho' falſe, might impoſe in the ſame manner upon "the credulity of mankind [1].'

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[1] Atqui nihil eſt quod miraculorum cauſæ univerſæ apud Atheos magis noceat, quam recentiorum Fabulatorum τερατίσματα. &c. Dodw. Diſſert. Iren. 2. § 69.

Cave

Dr. *Cave*, the large extent of whoſe faith ſhines through every page of his writings, yet plainly intimates his ſuſpicion, of what *Theodoret* has atteſted concerning this very *Symeon:* for ſpeaking of the amazing auſterities, which he practiſed, he adds, *moreover, if the Greek writers are to be regarded, he wrought innumerable miracles* [1].

Collier

Mr. *Collier* alſo, whoſe Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory ſhews, that miracles even of the groſſeſt kind were of no hard digeſtion with him, could not yet digeſt theſe of our *Symeon*, but declares them to be wholly *fabulous, and ſuch, as render the truth itſelf ſuſpected* [2].

Hody.

Dr. *Hody*, ſo highly eſteemed for his critical and theological learning, obſerves, " that ſtories concerning miracles are " common to all the writers of Lives, among the Chriſtians " of the middle ages, tho' otherwiſe good authors: and that " the profeſſed Hiſtorians themſelves, as *Theodoret* and *Evagrius*, are full of relations; which were the reſult of a " ſuperſtitious piety [3].

Since the moſt learned then, as well as orthodox of our Divines, and the moſt converſant alſo in Eccleſiaſtical antiquity, have ſo ſtrongly ſignified their diſtruſt, both of the teſtimony of *Theodoret*, and the particular acts of this *Symeon*, it is ſurprizing, that Dr. *Chapman* ſhould think it of ſervice to Chriſtianity, to lay ſo great a ſtreſs upon them, and in ſo peremptory a manner, to vindicate the credit of miracles, whoſe ſole tendency is to recommend, as a perfect pattern of the Chriſtian life, the moſt extravagant enthuſiaſm and contemptible ſuperſtition, that any age or hiſtory perhaps has ever produced. For that this was really the caſe, is evident

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[1] Hiſtor. Litterar. T. 1. p. 439.

[2] See Dictionar. in Symeon. Styl.

[3] The Caſe of Sees vacated by an unjuſt deprivation. c. x. p. 120.

I

from the writings of *Theodoret* himſelf, whoſe Life of *Simeon Stylites*, is a part onely of his *religious hiſtory*, as it is called; filled with the *Lives of thirty Monks*, of the ſame claſs and character; diſtinguiſhed by their peculiar auſterities; and vying with each other, who could invent the moſt whimſical methods and painful arts of mortifying their bodies. 30 Monks.

One of theſe called *Baradatus*, contrived a ſort of cage for his habitation, coarſly formed of lattice work, ſo wide and open, as to expoſe him to all the inclemencies of the weather, and ſo low at the ſame time, that it could not admit the full height of his body, but obliged him *to ſtand always in the poſture of ſtooping* [1]. Baradatus

Another of them called *Thalaleus*, of a very bulky ſize, ſuſpended himſelf in the air, in a cage of a different kind, contrived by himſelf, and made ſo low and ſo ſtrait alſo, that it left him no more room, than to ſit with *his head perpetually bent down between his knees*; in which poſture, he had ſpent *ten years*, when *Theodoret* firſt ſaw him [2]. Yet all theſe ridiculous whims and extravagancies are conſidered by *Theodoret*, as *the ſuggeſtions of the holy Spirit* [3], and divine inventions, to baffle the artifices of the Devil; or ſo many *ladders*, as he tells us, *by which they mounted up to heaven* [4]; and which were all confirmed by miracles, as a proof of the divine approbation. Thalaleus.

Theſe were the wonder-workers, and theſe the miracles of the fifth century; the character of which Dr. *Chapman* ſumms up to this effect in the following articles. Chapman

1. That they were of a public nature, and performed in ſuch a manner, as left no room for deluſion.

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[1] Hiſtor. Religioſ. c. XXVII.

[2] Ibid. c. XXVIII.

[3] Ἐγὼ δὲ τῆς θείας ἄνευ οἰκονομίας ταύτην πιστεύω γενέσθαι τὴν στάσιν. ib. p. 882. B.

[4] Καὶ τῆς εὐσεβείας οἱ τρόφιμοι τῆς εἰς οὐρανον ἀνόδου πολλὰς καὶ διαφόρους ἐμηχανήσαντο κλίμακας. Ib. p. 889. A.

2. That they were attended with beneficial effects, which could not poſſibly have gained credit, unleſs the ſtrongeſt evidence of ſenſe had proved them to be true.

3. That the end of them was not to confirm any idle errors or ſuperſtitions, but purely to advance the glory of truth and virtue.

4. That the accounts of them are given by men of unqueſtionable integrity, piety, and learning, who were eye-witneſſes of many of the facts, and declare in the moſt ſolemn manner, that they knew them to be true.

5. That they were far from being vain and unneceſſary, ſo as to render them doubtfull to after ages——but were atteſted by the ſtrongeſt moral evidence, equal to that, by which moſt of the antient miracles are ſupported.

6. That they are incapable of giving any countenance to the fabulous pretences of the Papiſts: and that a proteſtant of common capacity will diſcern as much difference between them and the Popiſh miracles, as between gold and braſs, between light and darkneſs [1].

Yet from the ſhort ſpecimen of theſe miracles already given, and much more, from a full liſt of them, which, if it were required, may hereafter be given, the very contrary character of them, I am perſuaded, will appear to be the true one, to all unprejudiced readers, in every one of thoſe articles.

1. That they were all of ſuch a nature, and performed in ſuch a manner, as would neceſſarily inject a ſuſpicion of fraud and deluſion.

2. That the cures and beneficial effects of them, were either falſe, or imaginary, or accidental.

3. That they tend to confirm the idleſt of all errors and ſuperſtitions.

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[1] Miſcell. Tracts, p. 175, &c.

4. That the integrity of the witneſſes is either highly queſtionable, or their credulity at leaſt ſo groſs, as to render them unworthy of any credit.

5. That they were not onely vain and unneceſſary, but generally ſpeaking, ſo trifling alſo, as to excite nothing but contempt.

And laſtly, that the belief and defence of them, are the onely means in the world, that can poſſibly ſupport, or that does in fact give any ſort of countenance, to the modern impoſtures in the Romiſh Church.

Then as to the Monks alſo, who are ſaid to have wrought thoſe miracles, the Doctor is not leſs zealous in defending and extolling all their extravagances. He declares, " that they " were intended for the beſt and moſt excellent purpoſes [1]. " That all the friends to Chriſtianity muſt think, that in their " voluntary auſterities, they ſhewed ſuch prudence, virtue, " and greatneſs of mind, as deſerve the higheſt encomiums of " poſterity [2]. And that the antient Monaſteries were very " different from the modern; quite remote from the corruptions of Popery, and deſerving the approbation of the ſtricteſt Proteſtants [3]." Yet for my own part, notwithſtanding all his panegyric on thoſe primitive Monks and monaſteries, I ſhall not ſcruple to own, 1ſt, That I look upon the whole inſtitution of monkery, from what age or what Saint ſoever it drew it's origin, to be contrary not onely to the principles of the Goſpel, but to the intereſts of all civil ſociety, and the chief ſource of all the corruptions, which have ever ſince infeſted the Chriſtian Church. 2dly, That by all, which I have ever read of the old, and have ſeen of the modern Monks. *Monks.*

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[1] Ibid. p. 162.

[2] Ibid. p. 165.

[3] Ibid. p. 180. 181.

Monks, I take the preference to be clearly due to the laſt, as having a more regular diſcipline, more good learning, and leſs ſuperſtition among them than the firſt [1].

Before we take leave of this ſubject, I ſhall juſt add a word or two concerning the character of *Theodoret* himſelf, to whoſe teſtimony Dr. *Chapman* pays ſo extraordinary a regard, and whoſe authority he declares to be deciſive in the caſe before us. The learned Monſ. *Du Pin*, in his account of him, extracted from his writings, ſays, “ that he was born at *Antioch* A. D. “ 386. that his birth was accompanied by miracles, both before “ and after it, which he himſelf relates in his religious hiſ“ ſtory: that, *if we may believe him*, his mother was healed “ of an incurable diſeaſe in her eye, by one *Peter* a Monk: “ that upon the prayers of another Monk, called *Macedonius*, “ God granted her to conceive a ſon, after thirteen years of

Du Pin

Newton.

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[1] Sir *Iſ. Newton* has ſhewn, that the Monks are the ſpawn and genuine offſpring of thoſe Hereticks, who in the ſecond and third centuries, affected an extraordinary ſtrictneſs of life: forbidding to marry and to eat the fleſh of animals; and practiſing many abſurd auſterities of faſtings, and watchings, which they injoined as neceſſary to all Chriſtians: whoſe doctrines and practices were rejected and condemned by all the Churches of thoſe ages. But certain Enthuſiaſts, near the beginning of the fourth century, poſſeſſed with the ſame principles, yet with ſome little refinement and correction of them, retired into the deſerts, where they ſpent their lives with an high reputation of ſanctity, in exerciſes of devotion and divine contemplation; not impoſing the ſame ſeverities on all, as their predeceſſors, the Heretics had done, but on thoſe onely, who voluntarily preferred the ſame monaſtic life. Theſe therefore began to be highly reverenced, and before the end of the fourth century, increaſed ſo faſt, that they overflowed both the Greek and the Latin Church like a torrent: eſpecially when *Conſtantin* the Great profeſſed to eſteem and honor them above all Chriſtians; being perſuaded, as *Euſebius* tells us, *that God did ſurely dwell in thoſe ſouls, who had devoted themſelves intirely to his ſervice.* In *Ægypt* therefore, where this enthuſiaſm principally reigned, a third part of the people are ſaid to have betaken themſelves to the deſerts: whence they ſoon ſpread themſelves through the Chriſtian world; and were the ringleaders in eſtabliſhing *the worſhip of Saints, and reliques*, and all thoſe other Superſtitions, with which the fourth and all ſucceding centuries ever after abounded. Obſervat. on the Proph. of Dan. par. 1. c. XIII.

“ barrenneſs, and to bring him ſafely into the world: that by
“ the prayers of the firſt of thoſe Monks, *Peter*, ſhe was pre-
“ ſerved alſo from death after her delivery: and that her huſ-
“ band and her ſon had often felt the effects of *Peter*'s virtue
“ and ſanctity, and were cured of their diſtempers by touching
“ onely his girdle [1].”

This account, I ſay, is drawn from *Theodoret* himſelf: whence we learn, that he was nurſed and trained in all the bigottry and ſuperſtition, with which that age abounded: taught from his very cradle, to venerate Monks and their miracles: and made to believe, with the firſt knowledge which he received, that he owed his very exiſtence to the efficacy of their prayers. He tells us, “ that his mother ſent him once
“ every week to beg the bleſſing of the Monk, *Peter*; and
“ that he went as often alſo, to receive the inſtructions and
“ benediction of the other Monk, *Macedonius*; who never fail-
“ ed to remind him, of the great pains, which it had coſt,
“ to bring him into the world, and how many nights he
“ had ſpent in praying to God for nothing elſe, but his
“ birth [2].” And as *Theodoret* is ſaid to have been very tenacious of the principles, which he had once imbibed [3], ſo it was his conſtant practice through his whole life, to viſit the cells and habitations of all the celebrated Monks of thoſe times; with whoſe lives and miracles he has filled his *religious hiſtory:* from which I ſhall here tranſcribe a ſtory or two, out of the great number, which he has recorded, of the ſame ſort, and

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[1] See Du Pin's account of Theodoret, Vol. IV. p. 55.

[2] Vid. Theodor, Hiſt. Religioſ. c. 9. p. 821. E. it. c. 13. p. 840. D. 839. D.

[3] Animo erat excelſo & elato; ſententiæ, quam ſemel imbiberat, tenaciſſimus, injuriarum & contradictionum haud ſatis patiens &c. Cave Hiſt. Litt. de Theodorit. T. 1. p. 406.

of his own knowledge, as a ſpecimen both of the judgement and the fidelity of the compiler.

Peter.

In his life of the Monk *Peter*, he declares, " that his very " garments wrought wonders, like to thoſe of St. *Paul:* which " I do not mention, ſays he, by way of hyperbole, but with " the teſtimony of truth for what I am ſaying. For his girdle " made of coarſe linnen, being very broad and long, he cut it " into two parts, with the one of which he girded his own " loins, and mine, with the other. This laſt my mother has " often applied to me and to my Father, when we were ſick, " and driven away our diſtempers by it; and made uſe of it " alſo herſelf, as a remedy for her own health. Many of our " acquaintance, who knew this, frequently borrowed the girdle, for the ſervice of other ſick people, and always found " the ſame good effects of it's virtue: till a certain perſon, who " borrowed it, ungratefull to his benefactors, never reſtored " it, and ſo we were deprived of the benefit of this gift [1]."

James.

In the life of another Monk, called *James*, he tells this ſtory, " that the reliques of ſome of the antient *Patriarchs*, *Prophets*, " and *Apoſtles* were brought to him in a cheſt from *Phœnicia* " and *Palæſtine*, and received by a public proceſſion of all the " orders of the Clergy and the Layety. But the Monk *James* " did not think fit to aſſiſt at this ſolemnity, having conceived " ſome doubts, it ſeems, whether the reliques, ſaid to be " *John Baptiſt*'s, were really ſo or not. Upon which, in the " night following, as he was praying, there appeared to him " a certain perſon cloathed in white, and demanded of him, " *why he did not come out to meet them?* and when *James* aſked, " who they were, of whom he ſpake; he replied, thoſe, who

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[1] Hiſt. Relig. c. IX. p. 826. B.

" came the other day from *Phœnicia* and *Palæſtine.* The next " night alſo the ſame perſon appeared to him again ; and in or" der to remove all his ſcruples, brought along with him St. " *John Baptiſt*, and the *Patriarch Joſeph*, who were ſeverally " preſented to him, and held diſcourſe with him on the ſubject " of their reliques [1]." With theſe ſtories, I ſhall leave it to the reader to determine, whether a writer of this turn and character can reaſonably be thought unprejudiced, and of an authority unconteſtable, or worthy indeed of any credit at all, where the honor of Monks, and the reality of their miracles are the points in quæſtion.

The ſame Monſ. *Du Pin*, after he has given us an abſtract of Theodoret's *religious Hiſtory*, adds the following reflection: " this Hiſtory contains many things remarkable, concern" ing the diſcipline of this time. By it we ſee, that great " honor was given to the Saints; that they were invoked; " that men expected to be helped by their prayers; that their " reliques were ſought after with great earneſtneſs; that people " believed very eaſily in them; attributed great virtue and ma" ny miracles to them; and were very credulous &c. [2]." But tho' the whole turn and purpoſe of *Theodoret's ſacred Hiſtory*, tends to ſtrengthen the intereſt of the Romiſh, and to hurt the credit of the Proteſtant cauſe; by celebrating the forged miracles of *Monks, and Saints, and reliques, and holy water, and ſacred oil*, it is curious to obſerve, with what a different temper, the Popiſh writer Monſ. *Du Pin*, and the Proteſtant writer. Dr. *Chapman*, have each expreſſed themſelves on the ſubject of his teſtimony. The Papiſt, candidly intimating his doubts, ſays; *if we may believe* Theodoret, ſuch and ſuch miracles were performed. The Proteſtant on the contrary, contemning all doubts, declares, *that we muſt believe him, that his evidence is unconteſtable, that to reject it, is to deſtroy the faith of hiſtory* [1]. The fortunes of theſe two writers were as different alſo, as their principles: the candor of the Papiſt being thought too favorable to Proteſtantiſm, was cenſured and diſgraced by the Popiſh Biſhops; the zeal of the Proteſtant, tending directly to Popery, was extolled and rewarded by the Proteſtant Biſhops.

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[1] Ibid. c. xxi. p. 862. D.

[2] See Du Pin. ibid. p. 65.

We have dwelt already ſo long on the miracles of the fifth century, that it muſt be needleſs, to examine the particular merit of that miracle, which Dr. *Berriman* has ſo accurately defended. I ſhall employ therefore but a very few words upon it. The ſtory is this: " *Hunneric the Vandal*, a Chriſtian " Prince of the *Arian hereſy*, in his perſecution of the orthodox " party in *Africa*, ordered the tongues of a certain ſociety of " them to be cut out to the roots: but by a ſurprizing inſtance " of God's good Providence, they were enabled to ſpeak articu" lately and diſtinctly without their tongues; and ſo continuing to " make open profeſſion of the ſame doctrine, they became not " onely the preachers, but living witneſſes of its truth; and a " perpetual rebuke to the *Arian* faction [2]." This miracle is atteſted by ſeveral contemporary writers, who affirm, that they had ſeen and heard ſome of thoſe Confeſſors *ſpeaking diſtinctly, after they had loſt their tongues.*

Hunneric

Now it may not improbably be ſuppoſed on this occaſion, that tho' their tongues were ordered to be cut to the roots, and are ſaid to have been ſo cut, yet the ſentence might not be ſo ſtrictly executed, as not to leave in ſome of them, ſuch a ſhare of that organ, as was ſufficient, in a tolerable degree, for the uſe of ſpeech. It is remarkable alſo, that two of this company are ſaid to have utterly loſt the faculty of ſpeaking; who had been deprived perhaps of their intire tongues: for tho' this be aſcribed, to the peculiar judgement of God, for a puniſhment of the immoralities, of which they were afterwards guilty, yet that ſeems to be a forced and improbable ſolution of the matter. We are told likewiſe, that another of theſe Confeſſors, *who had been dumb from his birth, yet by loſing his tongue with the reſt, acquired alſo the uſe of ſpeech:* which is a circumſtance ſo ſingular and extraordinary, that it carries with it a ſuſpicion of art and contrivance, to enhance the luſter of the miracle.

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[1] *If we may not admit ſuch evidence as this in proof of a matter of fact, I am afraid, we muſt ſhake the evidence of all human teſtimony, and believe nothing but what we ſee, feel, and know ourſelves.* Miſcel. Tracts, p. 167. it p. 174, &c.

[2] See Berrim. Hiſtoric. account of the Trinitar. Controv. p. 327, &c. and Dr. Chapm. Miſc. Tracts, p. 174,

But to come ſtill more cloſe to the point. If we ſhould allow after all, that the tongues of theſe Confeſſors were cut away to the very roots; what will the learned Doctor ſay, if this boaſted miracle, which he ſo ſtrenuouſly defends, ſhould be found at laſt to be no miracle at all? The tongue indeed has generally been conſidered, as abſolutely neceſſary to the uſe of ſpeech: ſo that to hear men talk without it, might eaſily paſs for a miracle, in that credulous age; eſpecially, when it gave ſo illuſtrious a confirmation to the orthodox faith, and ſo ſignal an overthrow to the *Arian Hereſy*. Yet the opportunities of examining the truth of the caſe by experiment, have been ſo rare in the world, that there was always room to doubt, whether there was any thing miraculous in it or not. But we have an inſtance in the preſent century, indiſputably atteſted, and publiſhed about thirty years ago, which clears up all our doubts, and intirely decides the quæſtion. I mean the caſe *of a Girl, born without a tongue, who yet talked as diſtinctly and eaſily, as if ſhe had enjoyed the full benefit of that organ:* a particular account of which is given, in *the memoires of the Academy of Sciences at* Paris, drawn up by an eminent Phyſician, who had carefully examined the mouth of the Girl, and all the ſeveral parts of it, in order to diſcover, by what means her ſpeech was performed without the help of a tongue: which he has there explaned with great ſkill and accuracy. In the ſame account he refers us likewiſe to another inſtance, publiſhed about eighty years before, by *a Surgeon of Saumur*, of a Boy, *who at the age of eight or nine years, loſt his tongue, by a gangrene or ulcer, occaſioned by the ſmall pox, yet retained the faculty of ſpeaking*, in the ſame manner as the Girl [1].

Let our Doctor then defend this miracle with all the power of his zeal and learning: let him urge the teſtimonies of *Senators, Chancellors, Biſhops, Archbiſhops and Popes*; of perſons, who *had too much learning and judgement*, he ſays, *to be deceived in ſo important a fact, tho' they lived an hundred years after it*; of *Æneas* alſo of *Gaza*, *who opened their very mouths*, as he tells us, *to make his obſervations with more exactneſs* [2]. Yet the humble teſtimony of this ſingle Phyſician, grounded on real experiment, will overturn at once all his pompous liſt of dignified authorities, and convince every man of judgement, that this pretended miracle, like all the other fictions, which have been impoſed upon the world, under that Character, owed it's whole credit to our ignorance of the powers of nature.

In ſhort; when we reflect on the corrupt and degenerate ſtate of the Church, in the end of the fourth century, allowed by the moſt diligent inquirers into Antiquity; and that this age was the pattern to all that ſucceded it; in which the ſame corruptions were not onely practiſed, but agreeably to the nature of all corruption, carried ſtill to a greater exceſs, and improved from bad to worſe, down to the time of the Reformation; we may ſafely conclude, without weighing the particular ſcruples, which may ariſe upon each ſingle miracle, that they were all, in the groſs, of the ſame claſs and ſpecies, the mere effects of fraud and impoſture. For we can hardly dip into any part of Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, of what age ſoever, without being ſhocked by the atteſtation of ſeveral, which from the mere incredibility of them, appear at firſt ſight to be fabulous. This is confeſſed on all ſides, even by the warmeſt defenders of the Primitive Fathers, and cannot be accounted for in any other way, than by aſcribing it, to the experience, which thoſe Fathers had, of the blind credulity and ſuperſtition of the ages, in which they lived, and which had been trained by them, to conſider *the impoſſibility of a thing, as an argument for the belief of it* [1]. But in whatever light we contemplate theſe ſtories; whether as believed, or as forged by them, or as affirmed onely, and not believed; it neceſſarily deſtroys their credit in all other miraculous relations whatſoever. Yet it is ſurprizing to ſee, with what eaſe, the Advocates of theſe miracles overlook and contemn all reflections of this kind, and think it ſufficient to tell us, that *the Fathers, tho' honeſt, were apt to be very credulous*: for with theſe diſputants, credulity, it ſeems, how groſs ſoever, caſts not the leaſt ſlur upon their teſtimony; which, in all caſes, where it does not confute itſelf by it's own extravagance, they maintain to be convincing and deciſive, and ſupe-

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[1] Memoires de L'Acad. des Scienc. Ann. 1718. p. 6.

[2] See Berrim. ibid.

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[1] *Tertullian*, diſputing againſt certain Heretics, who denied the reality of Chriſt's human nature; reaſons thus. "The Son "of God was crucified: it is no ſhame "to own it, becauſe it is a thing to be aſhamed of. The Son of God died: "it is wholly credible, becauſe it is abſurd. When buried, he roſe again to "life: it is certain, becauſe it is impoſſible. De Carne Chriſti, § 5.

Tertullian

rior to all ſuſpicion. Whereas the ſole inference, which reaſon would teach us to draw from an atteſtation of miracles, ſo conſpicuouſly fabulous, is; that the ſame witneſſes are not to be truſted in any; as being either incapable, from a weakneſs of judgement of diſcerning the truth and probability of things; or determined by craft and fraud, to defend every thing that was uſefull to them. In a word; in all inquiries of this nature, we may take it for a certain rule; that thoſe, who are conſcious of the power of working true miracles, can never be tempted either to invent, or to propagate any, which are falſe; becauſe the detection of any one, would taint the credit of all the reſt, and defeat the end propoſed by them.. But Impoſtors are naturally drawn, by a long courſe of ſucceſs, into a ſecurity, which puts them off their guard, and tempts them gradually, out of mere wantonneſs, and contempt of thoſe, whom they had ſo frequently deluded, to ſtretch their frauds beyond the bounds of probability, till by repeated acts of this kind, they tire the patience of the moſt credulous, and expoſe their tricks to the ſcorn even of the populace.

I have now thrown together all, which I had collected for the ſupport of my argument, or as much at leaſt, as I thought ſufficient to illuſtrate the real ſtate of the primitive miracles: and if we caſt up the ſumm of all that boaſted evidence, which the *unanimity of the Fathers, the tradition of the Catholic Church, and the faith of hiſtory* have produced at laſt on the other ſide, towards the confirmation of the ſaid miracles, we ſhall find the whole, to amount in reality to no proof at all. For to run over them all again in ſhort.

Recapitulation

The gift *of raiſing the dead,* is affirmed onely by the ſingle authority of *Irenæus,* Biſhop of *Lyons*; and was either not known, or not believed at leaſt, in the very ſame age, by another Biſhop,

ſhop, full as venerable, *Theophilus* of *Antioch*. The *gift of tongues*, which reſts likewiſe on the ſingle teſtimony of the ſame *Irenæus*; is confuted even by himſelf, who complains of his own want of it, in the very work of propagating the Goſpel. The *gift of expounding the Scriptures*, which is reckoned commonly with the reſt, and clamed in particular by *Juſtin Martyr*, is allowed, to have had no ſubſiſtence at all, in any age, or any writer of the primitive Church. The *gift of caſting out Devils*, the moſt celebrated of them all, is reduced to nothing, by the accounts even of the Antients themſelves, which plainly teſtify, that it had no effect in many caſes, and could not work a perfect cure in any. And as to other diſeaſes, where oil eſpecially was applied, they might probably enough be cured without a miracle; or by the ſame arts, with which the ſame cures were performed among the Heathens: which, tho' the undoubted effects of fraud, were yet managed ſo dexterouſly, as to be conſtantly aſcribed by the Chriſtians to the power of Dæmons. Laſtly, *the gift of Prophetic viſions and trances*, was of a kind, which could not eaſily be proved to the ſatisfaction of any; was of no ſervice therefore to the propagation of the Goſpel, or the conviction of unbelievers; being wholly exerciſed among the Chriſtians themſelves: and owing it's chief credit to Heretics and Enthuſiaſts; and always ſuſpected by the ſober and judicious: ſo that, after floriſhing for a while through a viſionary generation or two, it preſently after fell into utter contempt.

This then being the real ſtate of the miracles of the primitive Church, I freely commit them once more to the *Chapmans*, the *Berrimans*, and the *Stebbings*; to defend and enjoy them, as much as they pleaſe; happy without doubt, in this ſceptical age, to find themſelves bleſſed with that heroic faith, which can remove mountains, and beat down every obſtacle, which ſenſe or reaſon, or fact can poſſibly oppoſe to it. Dr. *Chapman* has declared beforehand, *that whenever my larger work ſhould appear, the primitive Fathers would find greater friends to their memory, and abler advocates to their cauſe, than I would wiſh to exiſt* [1]. That time is now come; and thoſe abler Advocates expected: but let them appear when they will, I am ſo far from grudging their help to the Fathers, that I wiſh them the ableſt, which Popery itſelf can afford: for Proteſtantiſm, I am ſure, can ſupply none, whom they would chuſe to retain in their cauſe; none, who can defend them, without contradicting their own profeſſion, and diſgracing their own character; or produce any thing, but what deſerves to be laughed at, rather than anſwered. I muſt however except one, who acts indeed with a better grace and more conſiſtency: for when I had treated him by miſtake, as *a Proteſtant*, he flatly diſowns the name, and calls himſelf a *Catholic Chriſtian* [2]; the ſame title, which a Popiſh writer had before aſſumed, in his remarks on my *Letter from* Rome; and what all theſe Advocates, who hang, as it were, between the two religions, affect to aſſume, that they may evade for a while the more invidious name of Papiſt.

Chapman

V. All that remains, towards the final confirmation of my argument, is, to refute, as I promiſed, ſome of the moſt plauſible objections, which have been made to it by my Antagoniſts; and which by humouring the prejudices and prepoſſeſſions of many pious Chriſtians, ſeem the moſt likely, to make an impreſſion to it's diſadvantage.

Objections.

§ 1. In the firſt place then; It is objected, that by the character, which I have given of the antient Fathers, *the authority*

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[1] See Jeſ. Cabal. farther opened, p. 45. [2] See Apologetic. Epiſt. p. 27, 28.

of the books of the New Teſtament, which were tranſmitted to us through their hands, will be rendered *precarious and uncertain.*

To which I anſwer; that the objection is trifling and groundleſs, and that the authority of thoſe books does not depend upon the faith of the Fathers, or of any particular ſet of men, but on the general credit and reception which they found, not onely in all the Churches, but with all the private Chriſtians of thoſe ages, who were able to purchaſe copies of them: among whom, tho' it might perhaps be the deſire of a few to corrupt, yet it was the common intereſt of all, to preſerve, and of none, to deſtroy them. And we find accordingly, that they were guarded by all with the ſtricteſt care, ſo as to be conceled from the knowledge and ſearch of their heathen adverſaries, who alone were deſirous to extirpate them. After ſuch a publication therefore, and wide diſperſion of them from their very origin, it is hardly poſſible, that they ſhould either be corrupted, or ſuppreſſed, or counterfeited by a few, of what character or abilities ſoever; or that, according to the natural courſe of things, they ſhould not be handed down from age to age, in the ſame manner, with the works of all the other antient writers of *Greece* and *Rome*, which tho' tranſmitted through the hands of many profligate and faithleſs generations of men, yet have ſuffered no diminution of their credit on that account: for tho' in every age there were ſeveral perhaps, who, from crafty and ſelfiſh motives, might be diſpoſed to deprave, or even to ſuppreſs ſome particular books, yet their malice could reach onely to a few copies, and would be reſtrained therefore from the attempt, or corrected at leaſt after the attempt by the greater number of the ſame books, which were out of their reach, and remained ſtill incorrupt. But beſides all this, there were ſome circumſtances peculiar to the books of the New Teſtament which inſured the preſervation of them more effectually, than of any other antient books whatſoever; the divinity of their character; and the religious regard, which was paid to them by all the ſects and parties of Chriſtians; and above all, the mutual jealouſies of thoſe very parties, which were perpetually watching over each other, leſt any of them ſhould corrupt the ſources of that pure doctrine, which they all profeſſed to teach and to deduce from the ſame books. Let the craft therefore of the antient Fathers be as great, as we can ſuppoſe it to be: let it be capable of adding ſome of their own forgeries for a while to the Canon of Scripture; yet it was not in the power of any craft, to impoſe ſpurious pieces, in the room of thoſe genuin ones, which were actually depoſited in all Churches, and preſerved with the utmoſt reverence, in the hands of ſo many private Chriſtians.

But I may go a ſtep farther, and venture to declare; that if we ſhould allow the objection to be true, it cannot in any manner hurt my argument: for if it be natural and neceſſary, that the craft and credulity of witneſſes ſhould always detract from the credit of their teſtimony; who can help it? or on what is the conſequence to be charged, but on that nature and conſtitution of things, from which it flows? or if the authority of any books be really weakened, by the character which I have given of the Fathers, will it follow from thence, that the character muſt neceſſarily be falſe, and that the Fathers were neither crafty nor credulous? that ſurely can never be petended; becauſe the craft and credulity which are charged upon them muſt be determined by another ſort of evidence; not by conſequences, but by facts; and if the charge be confirmed by theſe, it muſt be admitted as true, how far ſoever the conſequences may reach.

Objection 2d.

§ 2. It has been alledged, "that all ſuſpicion of fraud in "the caſe of the primitive miracles ſeems to be precluded, by "that public appeal and challenge which the Chriſtian Apo-"logiſts make to their enemies the Heathens, to come and "ſee with their own eyes the reality of the facts which they "atteſt." But this objection, tho' it may ſeem plauſible indeed to a common reader, yet to all, who are acquainted with the condition of the Chriſtians in thoſe days, and the difficulty of making their Apologies known to the world, will be found to have no real weight in it. The Goſpel indeed ſoon began to make a conſiderable progreſs among the vulgar, and to gain ſome few alſo of a more diſtinguiſhed rank, yet continued to be held in ſuch contempt by the generality of the better ſort, through the three firſt centuries, that they ſcarce ever thought it worth while to make any enquiry about it, or to examine the merit of it's pretenſions. The principal writers of *Rome*, who make any mention of the Chriſtians, about the Time of *Trajan*, plainly ſhew that they knew nothing more of them, or their religion than what they had picked up, as it were, by chance, from the groſs miſrepreſentation of common fame, and ſpeak of them accordingly, as *a ſet of deſpicable, ſtubborn, and even wicked Enthuſiaſts.*

Suetonius.
Tacitus.
Nero.

Suetonius calls them, *a race of men of a new and miſchievous ſuperſtition* [1]. And *Tacitus*, deſcribing the horrible tortures, which they ſuffered under *Nero*, for the pretended crime of burning the City of *Rome*, ſays; "that they were deteſted for "their flagitious practices; poſſeſſed with an abominable ſu-"perſtition; and condemned, not ſo much for their ſuppoſed "crime of ſetting fire to the City, as for the hatred of all

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[1] Afflicti ſuppliciis Chriſtiani: genus hominum ſuperſtitionis novæ & maleficæ, in Ner. c. 16.

“ mankind: and tho' they deſerved the moſt exemplary puniſhments, yet it raiſed ſome pity towards them, to ſee them ſo miſerably deſtroyed, not on the account of the public utility, but to ſatiate the cruelty of a ſingle man [1].”

Pliny
Trajan.

Pliny alſo, when he was the Governor of a Province, in which the Chriſtians were very numerous, and under an actual perſecution in the reign of *Trajan*, yet in his celebrated letter to that Emperor concerning them, declares; “ that he had never been preſent at any of their examinations, and did not ſo much as know, for what they were puniſhed, or how far they deſerved puniſhment: that by all the inquiries, which he had ſince made, he could not diſcover any practices among them, but what were harmleſs and innocent.—And nothing in ſhort, but a wretched and extravagant ſuperſtition, which had ſpread itſelf very wide, among perſons of both ſexes, of every age and condition; which might however be ſubdued by gentler methods; by moderating the rigor of the perſecution, and pardoning the penitent; by which lenity great numbers of them had already been recalled to their antient worſhip [2].”

Antoninus
Aurelius

This is the whole account, which we have of the Primitive Chriſtians, from the beſt Heathen writers, to the time of *Antoninus Pius:* in whoſe reign, and that of his Succeſſor, *M. Aurelius*, the antient Apologies, of *Juſtin Martyr*, *Melito* and

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[1] Quos per flagitia inviſos, vulgus Chriſtianos appellabat—exitiabilis Superſtitio rurſus erumpebat—haud perinde in crimine incendii, quam odio humani generis, convicti—&c. Ann. l. 15. 44.

[2] Cognitionibus de Chriſtianis interfui nunquam. ideo neſcio, quid aut quatenus aut puniri ſoleat, aut quæri—&c. Ep. l. x. 97.

N.B. Pliny ſays in this letter, that many of both ſexes, and of all ages, ranks or orders of men, had embraced Chriſtianity. *Tertullian* alſo gives the ſame account about an hundred years later. [Apologet. 1. ad Scapul. verſ. fin.] but it muſt be obſerved, that their accounts were given from the Provinces of *Bithynia* and *Africa*, where the dignity even of the moſt eminent was but very little conſidered or reſpected in the great Republic of *Rome*.

Bithynia
Africa.

I *Athena-*

Athenagoras, were addreſſed to the Emperor and Senate of *Rome:* notwithſtanding which, their condition, generally ſpeaking, continued much the ſame, through the following ages, till they were eſtabliſhed at laſt by the civil power: during all which time, they were conſtantly inſulted and calumniated by their Heathen Adverſaries, as a *ſtupid, credulous, impious ſect; the ſcum of mankind, and the prey of crafty Impoſtors:* calumnies, of which all the antient Apologiſts complain, and take great pains to confute. *Tertullian* expoſtulates very warmly with Tertullian the Heathen Magiſtrates, "that they would not give themſelves "the trouble, to make the leaſt inquiry into their manners "and doctrines; but condemned them for the mere name, "without examination or trial; treating a Chriſtian of courſe, "as guilty of every crime; *as an enemy of the Gods, Emperors, "laws, cuſtoms, and even of nature itſelf*——and what, ſays he, "can be more unjuſt than to hate, what you know nothing "of, even tho' it deſerved to be hated [1]?" *Arnobius* and Arnobius *Lactantius* make the ſame complaint near an hundred years later, in the beginning of the fourth century, that they were derided every where by the Gentiles, *as a ſenſeleſs, ſtupid race of blockheads and brutes, to whoſe impieties, all the calamities, which afflicted the ſeveral countries, where they lived, were conſtantly imputed* [2].

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[1] Chriſtianum hominem, omnium Scelerum reum, Deorum, Imperatorum, legum, morum, naturæ totius inimicum exiſtimas &c. Apol. §. 1, 2—Ἐφ' ἡμῶν δὲ τὸ ὄνομα ὡς ἔλεγχον λαμϐάνετε. &c. vid. Juſt. Mart. apol. 1. p. 8.

[2] Nos hebetes, ſtolidi, obtuſi pronuntiamur & bruti ſed peſtilentias, inquiunt, & ſiccitates, bella, frugum inopiam —reſque alias noxias—Dii nobis important injuriis veſtris, atque offenſionibus exaſperati—Arnob. l. 1. p. 2, 7.

Cur igitur pro ſtultis, vanis ineptis habemur? Lact. l. 4. c. 13. Illud quoque ortum eſt vulgare proverbium; *pluvia deficit*, fit cauſa Chriſtiani. Aug. Civ. D. l. 2. 3.

Si Tiberis aſcendit ad mœnia; ſi Nilus non aſcendit in arva; ſi cœlum ſtetit; terra movit; ſi fames; ſi lues; ſtatim, Chriſtianos ad Leonem, Tertull. Apol. 40.

In theſe circumſtances, it cannot be imagined, that men of figure and fortunes would pay any attention to the Apologies or writings of a ſect, ſo utterly deſpiſed; eſpecially, when on the one hand, there was no elegance of ſtyle or compoſition, to invite them to read; and on the other, all the diſcouragements, which the Government could give, to deter them from reading. Much leſs can we believe, that the Emperor and Senate of *Rome*, ſhould take any notice of thoſe Apologies, or even know indeed, that any ſuch were addreſſed to them. For ſhould the like caſe happen in our own days, that any Methodiſt, Moravian, or French Prophet, ſhould publiſh an apology for his brethren, addreſſed to the King and the Parliament; is it not wholly improbable, that the Government would pay any regard to it, or take it at all into their conſideration? How can it then be ſuppoſed, that the Emperor and Senate of *Rome*, who had a worſe opinion of the antient Chriſtians, than we of our modern Fanatics, and inſtead of tolerating, were uſing all methods to deſtroy them, would give themſelves the trouble to read, or to conſider the merit of their writings?

No Preſs.

We muſt add to all this, the great difficulty of publiſhing books, or of making them known to the world in thoſe ages. The caſe, which we now find in providing and diſperſing, what number of copies we pleaſe, by the opportunity of the preſs, makes us apt to imagine, without conſidering the matter, that the publication of books was the ſame eaſy affair in all former times, as in the preſent. But the caſe was quite different. For when there were no books in the world, but what were written out by hand, with great labor and expence, the method of publiſhing them was neceſſarily very ſlow and the price very dear; ſo that the rich onely and curious would be diſpoſed or able to purchaſe them; and to ſuch alſo, it was often difficult to procure them, or to know even where they were to be bought.

Epiſtle of Smyrna to the Philadelphians.

In the Epiſtle of the Church of *Smyrna*, mentioned above, concerning the Martyrdom of St. *Polycarp*, there is a paſſage or two, which will help to confirm what I am now aſſerting. For towards the end of it, the *Philadelphians*, to whom it is addreſſed, are deſired, as ſoon as they have informed themſelves, of the contents, *to ſend it forward to all the other brethren*, who lived more remote, or beyond *Philadelphia*, that they alſo might read it and glorify God. The note likewiſe, which is annexed to the end of the Epiſtle, declares, "that the copy of this "moſt valued piece, which had been tranſcribed from the book "of *Irenæus*, had lain buried and unknown at *Corinth* for ſeve"ral ages, almoſt deſtroyed by time, and in danger of being "loſt to the world, till it was diſcovered by a revelation from "*Polycarp* himſelf, made to one *Pionius*," from whoſe tranſcript, all the copies of it now extant are derived [1]. Theſe paſſages, I ſay, plainly intimate, how difficult it muſt have been to the Chriſtians of thoſe days to provide ſuch books as were wanted even for their own uſe, and much more to diſperſe ſuch a number of them, as was ſufficient for the information of the public.

Pionius.

Since this then was the condition of publiſhing books in thoſe primitive ages, in which the Chriſtians were neither able to bear the expence of copying, nor the Heathens diſpoſed to buy them, there is great reaſon to believe, that their Apologies, how gravely ſoever addreſſed to Emperors and Senates, lay conceled and unknown to the public for many years, in a few private hands, and among the faithful onely; eſpecially, when the publication of them was not onely difficult and expenſive, but ſo criminal alſo, as to expoſe them often to danger, and even to capital puniſhment; and when the books themſelves, as oft as they were found by the magiſtrate, inſtead of being read, were generally ordered to be burnt [1].

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[1] Μαθόντες οὖν ταῦτα, καὶ τοῖς ἐπέκεινα ἀδελφοῖς τὴν ἐπιστολὴν διαπέμψατε, ἵνα καὶ ἐκεῖνοι δοξάζωσι τὸν κύριον. § xx. it. xxiii, xxiv.

Objection 3d

§. 3. It is urged againſt me, "that no ſuſpicion of craft can "reaſonably be entertained againſt perſons of ſo exalted a piety, "who expoſed themſelves to perſecution and even to Martyr-"dom, in confirmation of the truth of what they taught." But this likewiſe will appear to have as little ſolidity in it as the former. For all, who are converſant with hiſtory, know; that nothing gives ſo invincible a prejudice, and ſo ſtrong a biaſs to the mind of man, as religious zeal in favour of every thing, that is thought uſeful to the object, which excites it. And the ſeveral facts, which I have already ſtated, will inable us to judge, in what manner the extraordinary zeal of thoſe antients may be preſumed to have operated in the caſe now in quæſtion. I ſhall ſay nothing more therefore on that head: but ſince ſome of thoſe Fathers, to whoſe teſtimony I have chiefly appealed, as *Papias*, *Juſtin*, *Irenæus*, *Cyprian*, &c. were not onely perſons of the greateſt piety and zeal, but ſaid to have been Martyrs alſo for the faith of Chriſt; it may be proper to add a reflection or two on the particular caſe of Martyrdom; in order to ſhew, that this venerable name made no real difference in the perſonal characters of men, nor ought to give any additional weight to the authority of a Chriſtian witneſs.

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[1] Καίπερ θανάτου ὁρισθέντος κατὰ τῶν διδασκόντων, ἢ ὅλως ὁμολογούντων τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Κριστοῦ, ἡμεῖς πανταχοῦ καὶ ἀσπαζόμεθα, καὶ διδάσκομεν. εἰ δὲ καὶ ὑμεῖς ὡς ἰχθροὶ ἐντεύξεσθε τοῖσδε τοῖς λόγοις, οὐ πλέοντι δύνασθε—τοῦ φονεύειν Juſt. M. Apol. 1. p. 69.

Nam noſtra quidem ſcripta cur ignibus meruerunt dari? cur immaniter conventicula dirui? Arnol. l. 4. verſ. fin.

There were various motives of different kinds, as Mr. *Dodwell* has ſhewn, which would naturally induce the primitive Chriſtians, not onely to indure, but even to wiſh and aſpire to Martyrdom. He obſerves, that among the antient *Jews*, the *Galileans* were remarkable for the obſtinacy of their temper, and a contempt of death: whoſe example, he imagines, might have ſome influence on thoſe firſt Chriſtians, who drew their origin from that country, and were conſtantly called *Galilæans*, and charged with the ſame ſpirit of obſtinacy by their adverſaries [1].” A character, which ſeems to be particularly verified in the Chriſtians of *Palæſtine*, concerning whom, *Tiberianus*, the Governor of *Syria*, ſends the following account to the Emperor *Trajan*.

Martyrdom.

Galileans

Tiberianus to Trajan.

“I am quite tired with puniſhing and deſtroying the *Galilæans*, or thoſe of the ſect called Chriſtians, according to your orders. Yet they never ceaſe to profeſs voluntarily, what they are, and to offer themſelves to death. Wherefore I have labored by exhortations and threats, to diſcourage them from daring to confeſs to me, that they are of that Sect. Yet in ſpite of all perſecution, they continue ſtill to do it. Be pleaſed therefore to let me know, what your Highneſs thinks proper to be done with them [2].”

Glory alſo, or reputation was another great ſpur to Martyrdom: for by the principles of thoſe ages, nothing was eſteemed more glorious than the *crown of Martyrdom*, as it was called. There was an anniverſary feſtival inſtituted to the honor of each Martyr; in which their memories were celebrated by panegyrical orations, and a veneration next to divine, paid to their

Glory.

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[1] Poterat & Judæorum, præſertim *Galilæorum* obſtinata illa indoles in primorum Chriſtianorum patientia locum habere. Dodw. Diſſert. Cyprian. 12. 2.

[2] Vid. Tiberian. Epiſt. apud Coteler. Edit. Patr. Apoſtol. V. 2. p. 181.

reliques. In their priſons they were viſited by the Chriſtians of all ranks; proud to miniſter to them in the very loweſt offices, and to kiſs their chains: and if they happened to eſcape with life from their tortures, as they frequently did, their authority was ever after moſt highly reſpected; in the deciſion of all controverſies; in abſolving men from the ordinary diſcipline of the Church; in granting pardon to lapſed Chriſtians; and reſtoring them to communion, on what terms they thought fit [1].

Power

Like the Widows and Martyrs to Juggernaut in India.

But the principal incentive to Martyrdom, was the aſſurance, not onely of an immortality of glory, and happineſs in another world, in common with all other pious Chriſtians, but of extraordinary and diſtinguiſhed rewards, and a degree of happineſs, proportionable to the degree of their ſufferings. For while the ſouls of ordinary Chriſtians were to wait their doom in ſome intermediate ſtate; or paſs to their final bliſs through

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[2] Quis in carcerem ad oſculanda vincula Martyris reptare patietur? [Tertull. ad Uxor. 2. 4.] Quam pacem quidam in Eccleſia non habentes, a Martyribus in carcere exorare ſolebant. [Id. ad Martyr. 2.] [Vid. Dodw. Diſſert. Cyprian. xi. 9, 10.]

Sacrificia pro eis ſemper, ut meminiſtis, offerimus, quoties Martyrum paſſiones & dies anniverſaria commemoratione celebramus. [Cypr Ep. 34. it. 37.]

Mandant aliquid Martyres fieri? ſi juſta, ſi licita, ſi non contra ipſum Dominum, a Dei Sacerdote facienda ſunt. [Cypr. de Lapſis. p. 174.] Ut qui libellum a Martyribus acceperunt, & auxilio eorum adjuvari apud Dominum in delictis ſuis poſſunt—cum pace a Martyribus promiſſa ad Dominum remittantur. [Id. Ep. 13. & 12.]

N. B. Euſebius ſpeaking of the perſecution under *M. Aurelius* and *L. Verus*, ſays, "that thoſe, who were then racked and "tortured for the confeſſion of their faith, "were ſo humble, that they would not "aſſume the title of Martyrs, nor ſuffer "it to be given to them, declaring none "to be worthy of that name, but thoſe "who were made perfect by ſuffering "death; and praying, that they alſo "might arrive at that perfection." [Hiſt. Eccleſ. 5. 2.] But we find a contrary practice in *Cyprian*'s time, who freely gives *the title of Martyr* to all, who had indured torments for the faith of Chriſt. Which was ſo far from being rejected by them, that many, as he complains, were ſo puffed up with pride on that account, as to give great diſturbance to the peace and diſcipline of the Church. Vid. Epiſt. x, xi, xii, xiii, &c.

a purgation by fire; it was a general belief, that the Martyrs were admitted *to the immediate fruition of Paradiſe, and that the fire of Martyrdom purged all their ſins away at once* [1]. And the opinion likewiſe, which commonly prevailed in thoſe days, that this world was near to it's end, made them the more eager ſtill to ſnatch that crown, which would entitle them to ſuch high privileges; give them a power with God, ſo as to procure benefits for others, and make them Aſſeſſors and Judges with Chriſt himſelf at the laſt day [2].

There was another notion, diligently inculcated and generally believed at the ſame time, which was ſufficient of itſelf to efface all the terrors of Martyrdom, *viz.* that under all that dreadfull apparatus of racks and fires, and the ſeeming atrocity of their tortures, the Martyrs were miraculouſly freed from all ſenſe of pain, nay felt nothing but tranſports of joy, from the cruelty of their tormentors. All which is expreſsly affirmed by many of the eccleſiaſtical writers. *The viſible aſſiſtance of heaven*, ſays Dr. *Chapman*, *relieving the pains of ſome*, *extinguiſhing* them

No Pain, but all Joy.

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[1] Sed & juſtos cum judicaverit, etiam igni eos examinabit, &c. Lact. VII. 21.

Nemo peregrinatus a corpore, ſtatim immoratur penes Dominum, niſi ex Martyrii prærogativa; paradiſo ſcilicet, non inferis diverſurus. Tertull. de Reſurr. carn. 43.

Quis non—pati exoptat? ut Dei totam gratiam redimat; ut omnem veniam ab eo compenſatione ſanguinis ſui expediat? omnia enim huic operi delicta donantur. Id. Apologet. ad fin.

N. B. Cyprian, ſpeaking of the different ſtate of the lapſed Chriſtians, tho' reſtored afterwards to the Church by penance, and of the Martyrs, who had nobly ſuffered death or torments for the faith of Chriſt, ſays; it is one thing, to lie at mercy; another, to arrive at glory; one thing, to be thrown into priſon, and not to be diſcharged, till you have paid the uttermoſt farthing; another, to receive the immediate reward of your faith and virtue: one thing, to be cleanſed from your ſins by a long courſe of torments, and a purgation by fire; another, to have all your ſins wiped off at once by martyrdom: in a word, one thing, to hang in ſuſpenſe about your doom, in the day of judgement; another, to be crowned directly by the Lord. Ep. 51. p. 71. ad fin.

[2] Αὐτοὶ τοίνυν οἱ θεῖοι Μάρτυρες ϖαρ' ἡμῖν, οἱ νῦν τȣ̃ χριϛȣ̃ ϖάρεδροι, ϗ τῆς βασιλείας αὐτȣ̃ κοινωνοὶ, ϗ μέτοχοι τῆς κρίσεως αὐτȣ̃. Euſeb. Hiſt. l. 6. c. 42.

them in others, and converting them into pleaſure and rapture in many——which facts, he declares, *to be ſo well known and ſo well atteſted; ſo plain and ſo indiſputable, that there was no occaſion for him to take the trouble of proving them* [1]. *Socrates*, the Hiſtorian, has furniſhed an inſtance of them in the caſe of one *Theodorus*: and the old Martyrologies, as they are publiſhed by the Romaniſts, and eſpecially *the Acts of Perpetua and Felicitas*, to which the Doctor refers us for the indiſputable proof of true miracles, will ſupply us with many more [2]. This *Theodorus* was a young Chriſtian,

Socrates
Theodorus.

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[1] Miſcellan. Tracts. p. 156.

[2] As appears beyond all diſpute from the acts of *Perpetua* and *Felicitas*, &c. Ibid. p. 169.

Perpetua & Felicitas.

N. B. It is ſtrange, that a Proteſtant Divine ſhould lay ſo much ſtreſs on theſe Acts, as to make them the unquæſtionable vouchers of true miracles: which, while they excite our compaſſion for the ſufferings, and our admiration of the courage of theſe two female Martyrs, yet ſhock and diſguſt us at the ſame time, to ſee all this virtue and fortitude derived, not from the calm and ſober principles of the Goſpel, but from the impetuoſity of a wild and extravagant enthuſiaſm. Among many other inſtances of this, written by *Perpetua* herſelf, in her priſon, ſhe relates what follows. "That, as ſhe was praying with the reſt of her fellow martyrs, ſhe happened to mention, all of a ſudden, and to her own ſurprize, the name of *Dinocrates*, which had not come into her mind of a long time, till that very moment. It was the name of her brother who died of a Cancer in his face, when he was but ſeven years old. This renewed her grief for his unhappy caſe; and convinced her, that ſhe ought to pray for him, as being now held worthy to intercede for others: whereupon ſhe began to put up her prayers and ſighs for him to the Lord, and in that ſame night received this viſion. She ſaw *Denocrates* coming out of a dark place, in which there were many others with him, greatly tormented by heat and thirſt; with a ſordid and pale countenance, and the ſame wound in his face, which he had when he died. There was a pool of water alſo in the place, but with a brink deeper than the Statue of the boy, who ſtretched himſelf out, as deſirous to drink, but was not able to reach the water. This grieved *Perpetua*, who, as ſoon as ſhe was awake, knew by this viſion, that her brother was in an uneaſy ſtate: but being aſſured, that ſhe could relieve him by her prayers, ſhe continued to intercede day and night, with groans and tears, that his puniſhment might be remitted for her ſake. Upon which, ſhe ſhortly after received another viſion, when the place, which before was dark, appeared bright and ſhining; and *Dinocrates* was now quite clean, well dreſſed and refreſhed; and inſtead of the wound, with a Scar onely in his face: and the brink of the pool was reduced to

Chriſtian, of eminent zeal and piety, who is ſaid to have ſuffered the moſt cruel tortures by the command of the Emperor *Julian*;

“ to the height onely of his navel, whence “ he inſtantly drew water: on the brink “ alſo ſtood a vial full of water out of “ which he began to drink, yet the water “ in it never failed: ſo that the boy, “ having now ſatisfied his thirſt, went “ away chearfully to play, as children “ uſually do, by which *Perpetua* under- “ ſtood, that her brother was removed “ from the place of his puniſhment.”

The caſe of this infant *Dinocrates* was alledged by an antient writer, in a controverſy with St. *Auſtin*, as a proof, that baptiſm was not abſolutely neceſſary to an admiſſion into paradiſe: to which St. *Auſtin* anſwers, “ that tho' the boy was “ but ſeven years old, he might probably “ be baptized at that age, and after bap- “ tiſm be guilty of lying or denying “ Chriſt; or in the time of perſecution “ might be drawn perhaps by his impious “ Father, who was an Heathen, into “ ſome act of Idolatry, for which he was “ doomed to a place of torments, till his “ pardon was obtained by the prayers of “ his Siſter, then going to die for Chriſt.” [de Origin. anim. l. 1. c. x. and l. 3. c. 9.] From theſe and ſeveral other viſions of the ſame kind, which are related in the ſame Acts, the Romaniſts draw what they take to be a demonſtrative and experimental proof of every thing, which they teach with regard to the other world; *of an Hell, a Purgatory, a Limbus, or ſeparate place of Infants, and another Limbus of the Antient Fathers, with a Paradiſe for the immediate reception of Martyrs: and that the dead may be relieved alſo from their pains by the prayers of the living.* [Vid. Ruinart. Acta Martyr. de SS. Perpet. & Felic. § VII and VIII, & notas Holſtenii & Poſſini.]

Such are the miracles, which Dr. *Chapman* affirms to be indiſputably proved by the Acts of *Perpetua* and *Felicitas*; and ſuch the doctrines, which are deduced from them: but tho' neither the enthuſiaſm nor the Popery, with which they abound, could check his Proteſtant zeal from aſcribing a divine authority to them, there is another circumſtance ſtill belonging to them, ſufficient, one would think, to have deſtroyed their whole credit with an Advocate of primitive and orthodox Antiquity: for the original Collector and publiſher of them appears to have been one of thoſe Heretics and diſciples of *Montanus*, who gave ſo much diſturbance to the Church in the early ages. This is declared to be moſt certain by the learned *Valeſius*, tho' a Papiſt; and notwithſtanding the pains, which Mr. Ruinart, the Editor of the Martyrologies, takes to confute that imputation, the truth of it ſeems to be unquæſtionable. *Valeſius* indeed, like a good Catholic, deſires, *that this circumſtance may not detract, either from the authority of thoſe Acts, or the veneration due to thoſe holy Martyrs, and charges it as a piece of craft on the Montaniſts*, that they made uſe of theſe viſions, to ſupport the credit of their own dreams. But when we reflect on the enthuſiaſtic ſpirit of *Perpetua*, and with what a confidence ſhe relates her wonderfull viſions and intercourſe with the Lord; and when we find her character and revelations mentioned with praiſe by *Tertullian*, then a *Montaniſt*, it is highly probable, that *Perpetua* alſo herſelf was

Julian; but after he was left for dead by his tormentors, was providentially preſerved and reſtored to life. “ *Ruffinus* happening to meet with him many years after, took occaſion “ to aſk him, whether he had been ſenſible of any very ſharp “ pains under the agony of his torture; to which he anſwered; “ that he had felt but very little, and that a certain young “ perſon ſtood by him all the time, wiping away the ſweat, “ which flowed from him, ſtrengthening his mind, and filling him with delight rather than torment, during his con- “ tinuance on the rack [1].

Ruſſinus.

Laſtly, we muſt add to theſe ſeveral motives, the ſcandal of flying from perſecution, and the infamy, which attended the lapſed Chriſtians; ſo as to make life hardly ſupportable to thoſe, who through fear of the rack and a cruel death, had been tempted to deny their faith, or guilty of any compliance with the idolatry of their perſecutors. All which topics, when diſplayed with art and eloquence by their ableſt Teachers, were ſufficient, to inflame the multitude to what pitch of zeal

Infamy.

they

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tainted with the ſame Hereſy; and that St. *Auſtin* conſequently, as an eminent Critic has obſerved, was drawn by ſome falſe tradition concerning theſe Martyrs, to honor them as true Saints, when in reality, they were Heretics. [Vid. Ittig. Diſſert. de Hæreſiarch. Sect. 2. c. 13. § 28.]

From the ſame Acts we ſee likewiſe, as I have ſaid, how theſe primitive Martyrs went out to meet their cruel deaths with a firm perſuaſion, that they ſhould feel no pain from them. *Felicitas* was eight months gone with child, when their execution drew near, and being afraid, as her companions alſo were, that on the account of her pregnancy, ſhe ſhould be left by them alone in the way to their common hope: they all put up their joint prayers to heaven, three days before they ſuffered, upon which ſhe fell preſently into labor, and was delivered of a female child: but in the time of delivery, when ſhe expreſſed a ſharp ſenſe of the pains which ſhe felt; one of the Servants of the priſon ſaid to her; *if you lament ſo much now; what will you do, when you are thrown to the beaſts, which you deſpiſed, when you refuſed to ſacrifice?* to which ſhe anſwered; *I now feel, what I ſuffer; but then, another will be in me, who will feel for me, becauſe I am to ſuffer for him.* Vid. Act. ibid. §. xv.

[1] Socrat. Hiſt. l. 3. c. 19. it. Sozom. l. 5. c. xx.

they pleaſed, ſo as to make them even provoke, and offer themſelves forwardly to the moſt dreadful torments. “ Who “ is there, ſays *Cyprian*, who would not ſtrive with all his Cyprian. “ might, to arrive at ſo great a glory; to be a friend of God: “ enter into preſent joy with Chriſt; and after earthly torments “ receive heavenly rewards? If it be glorious to worldly ſoldiers, after conquering an enemy, to return triumphant “ into their country, how much greater glory is it, after “ having vanquiſhed the Devil, to return triumphant into “ paradiſe, whence *Adam* was expelled, and there to erect “ trophies over that very enemy, who expelled him? to accompany God, when he comes to take vengeance on his enemies; to be placed at his ſide, when he ſits in judgement; to “ be made coheirs with Chriſt; equal with Angels; and together with *the Apoſtles, Prophets, and Patriarchs,* to rejoice in “ the poſſeſſion of an heavenly Kingdom? Theſe things you “ are to bear in your minds and memories. What perſecution can get the better of ſuch meditations? what torments “ be ſuperior to them [1]?”.

Theſe principles and motives, I ſay, had ſuch force, as ſometimes to animate even bad men, to indure a Martydom. For the Heretics alſo had their Martyrs, as all hiſtory informs us, Heretics as well as the Orthodox; who yet in their common ſufferings and death, continued to teſtify their mutual averſion, *and to refuſe all communion with each other* [2]. But by bad men, who became Bad Men came Martyrs, I do not mean ſuch onely, as were called Heretics, for that name was often given even to the beſt; but the proud, the contentious, the drunken, and the lewd, among the orthodox Martyrs themſelves: of all which kinds, there were many, as *St. Cyprian* complains, who, after they had nobly ſuſtained the trial of Martyrdom, and eſcaped with life from the torments of their perſecutors, yet by a petulant, factious, and profligate behaviour, gave great ſcandal and diſturbance to the diſcipline of the Church.

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[1] Exhortat. ad Martyr. c. 12. This may ſerve as a ſpecimen of that *true and noble and genuin eloquence of* Cyprian, which, as Dr. *Marſhall*, the Tranſlator of his works ſays, *reſembles an impetuous torrent, which carries away with it every thing it meets; ſince he was capable of raiſing what paſſions he pleaſed, and of perſuading us, to do whatever he had a mind to.* Pref. to his Tranſlation. p. 17.

[2] Καὶ ἐπειδὰν οἱ ἐπὶ τὸ τῆς κατὰ ἀλήθειαν πίστεως μαρτύριον κληθέντες ἀπὸ τῆς ἐκκλησίας τύχωσι μετά τινων τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς τῶν Φρυγῶν αἱρέσεως λεγομένων μαρτύρων, διαφέ-

Cyprian complains of Confessors.

This is expreſsly declared by *Cyprian* in ſeveral of his letters: in one of which, addreſſed to the whole body of the Confeſſors, after he has ſignified his joy, "that the greateſt part of them "were made the better by the honor of their confeſſion, and "preſerved their glory, by a quiet and inoffenſive carriage, "yet he had been informed, he ſays, of others, who infected "their ſociety, and diſgraced the laudable name of Confeſſor "by their evil converſation: ſome of them being drunken and "laſcivious, ſome puffed up and ſwollen with pride: while "others, as he had heard with the utmoſt grief, defiled their "bodies, the temples of God, ſanctified by their confeſſion, "with the promiſcuous and infamous uſe of lewd women [1]." In one of his letters alſo to the Clergy, he ſays, "I am griev-"ed, when I hear how ſome of them run about, wickedly and "inſolently, ſpending their time in trifles, or in ſowing diſ-"cord; and defiling the members of Chriſt, and which have "already confeſſed Chriſt, by the unlawfull uſe of women [2]."

διαφέρονται τὲ πρὸς αὐτοὺς, ϗ μὴ κοινωνήσαντες αὐτοῖς τελειοῦνται. Euſeb. Hiſt. l. 5. c. 16. it. c. 18.

[1] Sed quoſdam audio inficere numerum veſtrum, & laudem præcipui nominis prava ſua converſatione deſtruere, &c. &c. Epiſt. 6.

[2] Doleo enim, quando audio quoſdam improbe & inſolenter diſcurrere, & ad ineptias vel diſcordias vacare: Chriſti membra & jam Chriſtum confeſſa, per concubitus illicitos inquinare. Ep. 5. it. 7, 22, 24.

And in another treatiſe, where he is touching the ſame ſubject, "let no man wonder, ſays he, that ſome of the Confeſſors "commit ſuch horrible and grievous ſins; for confeſſion does "not ſecure them from the ſnares and temptations of the "Devil——otherwiſe we ſhould never after ſee any frauds, "and whoredoms and adulteries in Confeſſors, which I now "groan and grieve to ſee in ſome of them [1]."

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[1] De Unitat. Eccleſ. verſ. fin. p. 185.

N. B. The name of Martyr was given, as I have ſaid above, to all thoſe, who had ſuffered tortures for the public profeſſion of their faith before the Magiſtrates. And the title of Confeſſor to thoſe, who, after making the ſame profeſſion, had been committed onely to priſon, in order to be reſerved to the ſame tortures, or puniſhed with death. Whence *Tertullian* calls them, *Martyres deſignati*, or Martyrs elect, [ad Martyr. 1. vid. Cypr. Ep. 8. & Not. Rigalt. 8.]

But with regard to this caſe of Martyrdom, I cannot forbear obſerving a ſtrange contrariety both of principle and practice in theſe primitive ages, between the times of *Polycarp* and *Tertullian*. The Martyrdom of *Polycarp*, in the narrative of it, written by the Church of *Smyrna*, is twice called an *Evangelical Martyrdom*, or performed according to the rules of the Goſpel and in imitation of Chriſt; [§ 1, 19.] who did not offer himſelf forwardly to his enemies, but withdrew himſelf from them, and waited till he was betrayed into their hands: and commanded his Apoſtles alſo, *when they were perſecuted in one City, to flee into another*. [Matt. x. 29.] When the perſecution therefore grew hot in *Smyrna*, *Polycarp* withdrew himſelf from that City into the neighbouring Villages; ſhifting his quarters ſtill from Village to Village, to avoid his purſuers, till he was betrayed by one of his own domeſtics; [§ 9.] and ſo fulfilled both the example and precept of our Lord. And upon the ſame authority alſo *Clemens* of *Alexandria* declares it to be a ſin, and a kind of ſelf-murther, not to flee on ſuch an occaſion from the malice of their perſecutors. [Stro. l. 4. c. x.]

Polycarp.

Tertullian, on the contrary, about half a century after, wrote a book againſt *all flight in perſecution*, in which he labors to prove, "that our Saviour's precept was "temporary, and peculiar to the circumſtances of thoſe times, and addreſſed "wholly to the Apoſtles; who yet afterwards, when thoſe circumſtances were "changed, both practiſed and preſcribed a "different conduct. That it was baſe in "private Chriſtians to fly, and much "more in Biſhops and Paſtors.—That a "good Shepherd will lay down his life "for his flock, but a bad one fly at the "ſight of the wolf, and leave his ſheep to "be torn in pieces" — [p. 97, 696.] He inveighs alſo againſt another practice, which ſeems to have been common among the Chriſtians of thoſe days, *of ranſoming themſelves from their perſecutors by a ſumm of money*; and declares it to be "an affront "to God to redeem thoſe by money, "whom

Tertullian.

It is not my deſign, by what is ſaid here on the ſubject of Martyrdom, to detract in any manner from the real merit and juſt praiſe of thoſe primitive Martyrs, who with an invincible conſtancy, ſuſtained the cauſe of Chriſt, at the expence of their lives. It is reaſonable to believe, that, generally ſpeaking, they were the beſt ſort of Chriſtians, diſtinguiſhed by their exemplary zeal and piety; and the chief ornaments of the Church in their ſeveral ages: yet it is certain, that they were ſubject ſtill to the ſame paſſions, prejudices, and errors, which were common to all the other pious Chriſtians of the ſame age. My ſole view therefore is, to expoſe the vanity of thoſe extravagant honors, and that idolatrous worſhip, which are paid

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" whom Chriſt had redeemed with his " blood: and to make ſecret bargains " with an informer or ſoldier, or knaviſh " Preſident, for the life of a Chriſtian " (whom Chriſt had purchaſed and ſet " free in the face of the world) as if it " were for a thief. [p. 697, 698.] He " exhorts them therefore to commit them- " ſelves intirely to God: who could " either throw them into the midſt of their " enemies, while they were flying, or " cover them from danger even in the " midſt of the people: and he ſhews by " an eminent example, that neither flight " nor money was effectual to procure their " ſafety. *Rutilius*, ſays he, a moſt holy " Martyr, after he had oft eſcaped by " flying from place to place, and redeem- " ed himſelf, as he imagined, from all " danger by his money, yet in all this " ſecurity, was unexpectedly apprehend- " ed, carried before the Preſident, and " put to a ſevere torture, for the cor- " rection, I believe, of his flight: and " being committed at laſt to the flames, " he then aſcribed the Martyrdom, which " he had been avoiding, to the mercy of " God: and what elſe did the Lord intend " to teach us by this example, but that we " ought not to fly from perſecution?" [p. 93.]

Theſe were the principles, which generally prevailed in the Church from the time of *Tertullian:* ſo that when two of the moſt eminent Biſhops, who ſucceded him, St. *Cyprian of Carthage, and* St. *Dionyſius of Alexandria*, found it expedient in a time of perſecution, to preſerve their lives by retiring from their ſeveral Sees, they had no other excuſe to recur to, but the plea of a divine revelation, and the expreſs command of God for it: the precept and example of our Saviour; the practice of his Apoſtles; and *the Evangelical Martyrdom of St*. Polycarp, being no longer of any force, againſt the Enthuſiaſtic zeal, and viſionary temper of that age. Which zeal however, becauſe it happened to be ridiculed by an infidel writer, is ſtrenuouſly defended by Dr. *Chapman*, in the very words and reaſoning of *Tertullian*. See Miſcell. Tracts, p. 157.

to them indiſcriminately by the Church of *Rome*; and to ſhew eſpecially, that the circumſtance of their Martyrdom, while it gives the ſtrongeſt proof of the ſincerity of their faith and truſt in the promiſes of the Goſpel, adds nothing to the character of their knowledge or their ſagacity; nor conſequently, any weight to their teſtimony, in preference to that of any other juſt and devout Chriſtian whatſoever [1].

Objection 4th

§. 4. It has been frequently objected by my Antagoniſts, that to reject the unanimous teſtimony of the Fathers, in their reports of the primitive miracles, will deſtroy the faith and credit of all hiſtory.

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avanarola

Jer. Taylor

[1] *Savonarola*, a moſt pious and learned Monk of the fifteenth century, preached with great force and eloquence in *Italy*, againſt the corruptions of the Court of *Rome*, and the flagitious life and practices of *Pope Alexander* the ſixth, who not being able to ſilence him, condemned him to be hanged: of whom Dr. *Jer. Taylor* tells the following ſtory.

"Two *Franciſcan Friers*, ſays he, offered themſelves to the fire, to prove *Savonarola* to be an Heretic. But a certain *Jacobin* offered himſelf to the fire, to prove, that *Savonarola* had true revelations, and was no Heretic. In the mean time *Savonarola* preached, but made no ſuch confident offer, nor durſt he venture at that new kind of *fire ordeal*, and put the caſe, that all four had paſſed through the fire, and died in the flames: what would that have proved? Had he been a Heretic, or no Heretic, the more or the leſs, for the confidence of theſe zealous Idiots? If we mark it, a great many arguments, on which many Sects rely, are no better probation than this." Lib. of Proph. Ep. Dedic. p. 39.

Sir Tho. Roe

There is another ſtory likewiſe, ſomewhat applicable to the preſent purpoſe, which I have elſewhere made uſe of, as it is told by Sir *Tho. Roe*; "that the houſe and Church of the Jeſuits in *India* happening to be burnt, the Crucifix was found untouched, which was given out as a miracle. Upon this, the King ſent for the Jeſuit, and having examined him about the fact, made this propoſal to him, *that if he would caſt the Crucifix into the fire before his face, and it did not burn, he would turn Chriſtian.* The Jeſuit would not venture the credit of his religion on ſo hazardous an experiment, yet offered to caſt himſelf into the fire as a proof of his own faith, which the King would not allow." For he had ſenſe enough to know the difference, between the effect of a miracle and a martyrdom; that the laſt could prove nothing but the Jeſuit's ſincerity, in what he profeſſed to believe; whereas the firſt would yield the ſtrongeſt confirmation to the truth alſo of what he taught. [See Lett. from *Rome*, Prefat. Diſc. p. 100.]

Anſwer.

This was the conſtant cant of all the zealots, even of the Heathen world, whenever any of their eſtabliſhed ſuperſtitions were attacked by men of ſenſe. "If theſe things, they cried, "approved by the wiſdom of our anceſtors, and confirmed by "the conſent of ages, can be ſhewn at laſt to be falſe, we "muſt burn all our annals, and believe nothing at all [1]." And the ſame outcry, as *Euſebius* tells us, was made by them alſo againſt the Chriſtians, when the Goſpel firſt began to ſpread itſelf among them: "that to reject a belief and wor-"ſhip univerſally eſtabliſhed by Kings, Legiſlators, and Phi-"loſophers of all nations, whether *Greeks* or *Barbarians*, was "an impious apoſtacy from the rites of their anceſtors, and a "contradiction to the ſenſe and judgement of mankind [2]." The Chriſtians on the other hand conſtantly derided this plea, and declared, "that to follow the inventions of their anceſtors "without any judgement or examinations, and to be led per-"petually by others, like brute animals, was to preclude them-"ſelves from that ſearch of wiſdom and knowledge, which is "natural to man [3]." Yet when it came at laſt to their own turn, to find the authority of ages on their ſide, they took up the ſame plea, which they had before rejected; and urge it at this day, as the principal objection to Proteſtantiſm; "that "it is a *mere novelty*, which had no exiſtence in the world "before *Luther*, contradictory to the practice of all the pri-"mitive Saints and Martyrs of the Catholic Church, and to "the unanimous conſent of fifteen centuries."

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[1] Negemus omnia; comburamus annales; ficta hæc eſſe dicamus, &c. Cic. de Divin. l. 1. 17.

[2] Euſeb. Præpar. Evangel. l. 1. c. 2.

[3] Quare cum ſapere, id eſt, ſapientiam quærere, omnibus ſit innatum; ſapientiam ſibi adimunt, qui ſine ullo judicio inventa majorum probant, & ab aliis, pecudum more, ducuntur, &c. Lactant. Divin. Inſtit. l. 2. c. 8.

If this objection therefore had ever been found to have any force in it, the antient Chriſtians could never have overruled the impoſtures of Paganiſm; nor our Reformers, the ſuperſtitions of Popery. But in truth, when it comes to be ſeriouſly conſidered, it will appear to have no ſenſe at all in it: and if the Doctors *Chapman* and *Berriman*, who now revive and ſo zealouſly urge it, were called upon to explane themſelves upon it, they would find it difficult, I dare ſay, to tell us what they mean by it. If they mean, that a contempt of thoſe miracles, which they would perſuade us to believe, would neceſſarily derive the ſame contempt on hiſtory itſelf; all experience has ſhewn the contrary; for tho' there have been doubters and contemners of ſuch miracles in all ages, yet hiſtory has maintained it's ground through them all. During the three firſt centuries, the whole world in a manner not onely doubted, but rejected the miracles of the primitive Chriſtians: yet hiſtory was written and read with the ſame pleaſure and profit as before, and applied by the unbelievers themſelves to the confirmation of their very doubts. Our commerce with the times paſt, as they are repreſented to us in hiſtory, is of much the ſame kind, with our manner of dealing with the preſent. We find many men in the world, whoſe fidelity we have juſt ground to ſuſpect; yet a number of others, whom we can readily truſt, ſufficient to ſupport that credit and mutual confidence, by which the buſineſs of life is carried on: juſt ſo in antient Hiſtory; we find many things, of which we have cauſe to doubt; many, which we are obliged to reject; yet it's uſe ſtill ſubſiſts, and from real and indiſputable facts, ſupplies ſufficient matter both of inſtruction and entertainment to every judicious reader.

If our Doctors therefore mean any thing by the objection, which we are examining, it muſt be this; that the ſame principle, which induces us to ſuſpect the primitive miracles, and particularly thoſe of *Symeon Stylites*, when ſo forcibly and credibly atteſted, muſt induce us alſo, if we are conſiſtent with ourſelves, to ſuſpect every thing, that is delivered to us from antient hiſtory. But they widely miſtake the matter; and do not at all reflect on what I have intimated above, that the hiſtory of miracles is of a kind totally different, from that of common events, the one, to be ſuſpected always of courſe, without the ſtrongeſt evidence to confirm it; the other, to be admitted of courſe, without as ſtrong reaſon to ſuſpect it. Ordinary facts, related by a credible perſon, furniſh no cauſe of doubting from the nature of the thing: but if they be ſtrange and extraordinary; doubts naturally ariſe, and in proportion as they approach towards the marvellous, thoſe doubts ſtill increaſe and grow ſtronger: for mere honeſty will not warrant them; we require other qualities in the Hiſtorian; a degree of knowledge, experience, and diſcernment, ſufficient to judge of the whole nature and circumſtances of the caſe: and if any of theſe be wanting, we neceſſarily ſuſpend our belief. A weak man indeed, if honeſt, may atteſt common events, as credibly as the wiſeſt; yet can hardly make any report, that is credible, of ſuch as are miraculous; becauſe a ſuſpicion will always occur, that his weakneſs, and imperfect knowledge of the extent of human art, had been impoſed upon by the craft of cunning Jugglers. On the other hand, ſhould a man of known abilities and judgement relate to us things miraculous, or undertake to perform them himſelf, the very notion of his ſkill, without an aſſurance alſo of his integrity, would excite

Distinction

onely the greater ſuſpicion of him [1]; eſpecially, if he had any intereſt to promote, or any favorite opinion to recommend, by the authority of ſuch works: becauſe a pretenſion to miracles, has, in all ages and nations, been found the moſt effectual inſtrument of Impoſtors, towards deluding the multitude, and gaining their ends upon them.

There is not a ſingle Hiſtorian of Antiquity, whether Greek or Latin, who has not recorded *Oracles, prodigies, prophecies and miracles,* on the occaſion of ſome memorable events, or revolutions of States and Kingdoms. Many of theſe are atteſted in the graveſt manner and by the graveſt writers, and were firmly believed at the time by the populace: yet it is certain, that there is not one of them, which we can reaſonably take to be genuin: not one, but what was either wholly forged, or from the opportunity of ſome unuſual circumſtance attending it, improved and aggravated into ſomething ſupernatural. This was undoubtedly the caſe of all the Heathen miracles; and though it may hurt in ſome meaſure the general credit of miracles, yet, as experience has plainly ſhewn, it has not in any degree affected the credit of common hiſtory. For example, *Dionyſius of Halicarnaſſus* is eſteemed one of the moſt faithfull and accurate Hiſtorians of Antiquity: we take his word without ſcruple, and preferably even to the Roman writers, in his account of the civil affairs of *Rome*; yet we laugh at the fictitious miracles, which he has interſperſed in it. " In the war with the *Latins*, he tells us, " how the Gods, *Caſtor and Pollux*, appeared viſibly on white " horſes, and fought on the ſide of *the Romans*, who by their " aſſiſtance gained a complete victory; and that for a perpe-

Oracles, Prodigies
Prophecies Miracles
Greek and Roman.

Dion. Hal.

Castor & Pollux.

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[1] Quo quis verſutior & callidior eſt, hoc inviſior & ſuſpectior, detracta opinione probitatis. Cic. Off. 2. ix.

" tual memorial of it, a Temple was publicly erected, and a " yearly feſtival, ſacrifice and proceſſion inſtituted to the honor of thoſe Deities [1]." Now tho' no body at this day believes a tittle of the miracle, yet the faith of Hiſtory is not hurt by it. We admit the battel and the victory; and take the miraculous part to be, what it certainly was, the fiction of the Commanders or perſons intereſted; contrived for the ſake of ſome private, as well as public benefit, which the nature of the caſe will eaſily ſuggeſt.

Thus in the narrative alſo, above mentioned, of the Martyrdom of *St. Polycarp*, the point of hiſtory is, that he was condemned to death at *Smyrna*, of which he was Biſhop, and there actually burnt at the Stake, for his profeſſion of the Chriſtian faith. We have no doubt therefore of his Martyrdom, yet may reaſonably pauſe at the miracles, which are ſaid to have attended it. The voice pretended to come from heaven, was heard onely by a few; and that in a time of ſuch hurry, in which nothing could be heard diſtinctly. If ſuch a voice therefore had been uttered by any one in the croud, as it was hardly poſſible to diſcern whence it came, ſo thoſe whoſe zeal and imagination were particularly affected by ſo moving an occaſion, might eaſily miſtake it for miraculous. The flame alſo is ſaid to have made an arch around his body, and could not burn it: an appearance, which might eaſily happen from the common effects of the wind, or ſomething at leaſt ſo like it as to afford matter enough to a ſuperſtitious fancy, to ſupply the reſt. But the circumſtance of a *Dove flying out of his body, when pierced by a ſword*, is beyond all belief: or if a *Dove* was really ſeen to fly out of the wood, which was prepared to conſume him, it might have been conveyed thither, probably by deſign, in order to be let looſe at a certain moment: as in the funerals of the Roman Emperors, an Eagle was always obſerved to fly out of the funeral pile, as ſoon as it began to blaze, which was ſuppoſed *to convey the ſoul of the deceaſed* into heaven: of which a ſolemn depoſition was conſtantly made upon oath, in order to the Deification of thoſe Emperors [1].

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[1] Vid. Dionyſ. Hal. Antiqu. l. 6. p. 337. Edit. Oxon.

N. B. A late Hiſtorian of our own Kingdom, in his deſcription of the battel of *Worceſter*, between *Charles* II. and *Oliver Cromwell*, has delivered a ſtory to poſterity, concerning a certain contract made in form, between *Oliver and the Devil*, in a perſonal conference. Which ſtory was ſo ſtrongly atteſted, that he thought himſelf obliged to inſert it, as I heard him ſay, by the advice of ſome learned Friends. But the faith of hiſtory would reſt on a very ſlippery bottom, could it be ſhaken in any degree by our contempt of ſo ſilly a tale: which tho' no man of a ſound judgement can think credible, yet none will conceive the leaſt doubt on that account, about the reality of the battel or the other circumſtances of it, as they are related by the ſame Hiſtorian. See Echard's Hiſt. of Engl.

Contract bet. C
and the D.

Dove

Eagle.

But the caſe of witchcraft affords the moſt effectual proof of the truth of what I am advancing. There is not in all hiſtory any one miraculous fact, ſo authentically atteſted as the exiſtence of witches. All Chriſtian nations whatſoever have conſented in the belief of them and provided capital laws againſt them: in conſequence of which, many hundreds of both Sexes have ſuffered a cruel death. In our own country, great numbers have been condemned to die, at different times, after a public trial, by the moſt eminent Judges of the Kingdom: and in ſome places, for a perpetual memorial of their diabolical practices, anniverſary ſermons and ſolemnities have been piouſly

Witchcraft.

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[1] Ἀετὸς δέ τις ἐξ αὐτῆς ἀφεθεὶς ἀνίπτατο, ὡς καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸν οὐρανον ἀναφέρων. Dio. de Fun Auguſt. l. 56. p. 598.

Γενομένου δὲ τούτου, ἀετός τις ἐξ αὐτῆς ἀνίπτατο. καὶ ὁ μὲν Περτίναξ οὕτως ἠθανατίσθη. Id. de Fun. Pertinac. l: 74. p. 842.

Καὶ τί γὰρ τοὺς ἀποθνήσκοντας παρ᾽ ὑμῖν αὐτοκράτορας ἀεὶ ἀπαθανατίζεσθαι ἀξιοῦντες, καὶ ὀμνύντα τινα προάγετε ἐωρακέναι· ἐκ τῆς πυρᾶς ἀνερχόμενον εἰς τὸν οὐρανον τὸν κατακαέντα Καίσαρα. Juſt. Martyr. Apol. 1. p. 32. Ed. Thirlb.

inſtituted, and ſubſiſt at this day, to propagate a deteſtation of them to all poſterity [1]. Now to deny the reality of Facts ſo

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Jewel.

[1] In the beginning of Queen *Elizabeth*'s reign, the Court ſeems to have been greatly alarmed by an imaginary increaſe of this Infernal Art, and the horrible miſchiefs, which it was then actually perpetrating in the Kingdom; and which were loudly proclamed from the Pulpit, by many of the celebrated Preachers. Among the reſt, it is ſurprizing to perceive, to what a length of ſuperſtition and credulity the great Biſhop *Jewel* was carried on this occaſion, by his prejudices and prepoſſeſſion in favor of this popular deluſion: a Prelate as venerable for his piety, learning and judgemeut, as any, in the earlieſt ages of the Church: who, in a Sermon preached before the Queen, taking occaſion to touch upon this ſubject, addreſſes himſelf to Her in the following words: "it may pleaſe your Grace to underſtand, that this kind of People, I mean witches and ſorcerers, within theſe few years are marvelouſly increaſed within your Grace's realm. Theſe eyes have ſeen moſt evident and manifeſt marks of their wickedneſs. Your Grace's Subjects pine away, even unto death; their colour fadeth; their fleſh rotteth: their ſpeech is benumbed; their ſenſes bereft. Wherefore your poor Subject's humble petition to your Highneſs is, that the laws touching ſuch Malefactors may be put in due execution. For the ſhoal of them is great, their doings horrible, their malice intolerable, their examples moſt miſerable: and I pray God, they never practiſe farther than upon the ſubject." Upon which paſſage Mr. *Strype* remarks, that the remonſtrances of this kind made by this Biſhop and others gave occaſion, *to bring a Bill into the next Parliament, for making Inchantments and witchcraft Felony*. See annals at the Reformat. vol. 1. p. 8.

When *Tertullian*, in proof of the miraculous powers, which were clamed by the Chriſtians of that age, challenges the Heathen Magiſtrates, to come and ſee how eaſily the Chriſtian *Exorciſts* could drive Devils out of the bodies of men, he might be aſſured probably at the ſame time, that the notice of his challenge would never reach thoſe Magiſtrates, or at leaſt, that they would never pay any regard to it: yet pluming himſelf, as it were, upon it he adds; *and what can be more manifeſt than this operation, what more convincing than this proof?* [Apolog. c. 23.] But I would aſk the warmeſt advocates of the primitive miracles, whether this *convincing proof of Tertullian*, or the expreſs teſtimony of any other Father, or any number of them can in any manner be compared with that ſtrength of evidence, which, through all ages, affirmed the exiſtence of witches and their direfull practices, by the moſt ſolemn acts of Kings and Parliaments and whole nations; who, after many public trials and the ſtricteſt examinations have conſtantly atteſted the reality of the facts and crimes, with which they were charged, of inflicting horrible pains and diſeaſes, and deſtroying the lives of many innocent People, by the force of their charms and ſorceries. See the printed trials of *nineteen witches*, ten of whom were condemned together at *Lancaſter*, 1612, where the Judge, in paſſing ſentence of death upon them, ſpeaks ſo ſolemnly atteſted, and ſo univerſally believed, ſeems to give the lie to the ſenſe and experience of all Chriſtendom; to the wiſeſt and beſt of every nation, to public monuments ſubſiſting to our own times: yet the incredibility of the thing prevailed and was found at laſt too ſtrong for all this force of human teſtimony: ſo that the belief of witches is now utterly extinct, and quietly buried without involving hiſtory in it's ruin, or leaving even the leaſt diſgrace or cenſure upon it.

There is another inſtance alſo, within our own times, more directly applicable to our preſent purpoſe. I mean the pretended miracles of the late Abbé de Paris, which made ſuch a noiſe in France a few years ago, and are ſtill believed by a great part of that Kingdom, or by all perhaps, who believe any other miracles of that Church. This Abbé was a zealous *Janſeniſt*, and warm oppoſer of that Bull or Conſtitution of *Pope Clemens* XI. called *Unigenitus*, by which all the doctrines of his ſect were expreſsly condemned. He died in 1725, and was buried in the Church-yard of *St. Medard* in *Paris*; whither the great reputation of his ſanctity drew many People to viſit his tomb, and pay their devotions to him, as to a Saint: and this concourſe gradually increaſing made him ſoon be conſidered, as a ſubject, proper to revive the credit of that party, now utterly depreſſed by the power of the Jeſuits, ſupported by the authority of the Court. Within ſix years therefore after his death the confident report of miracles, wrought at his tomb, began to alarm not onely the City of *Paris*, but the whole nation: while infinite crouds were perpetually preſſing to the place, and proclaming the benefits received from the Saint: nor could all the

Abbe de Paris.

Jansenist.

1725

ſpeaks of *many cruel and barbarous murthers*, of which they had been guilty, beſides other crimes, of tormenting the bodies and deſtroying the cattle of their neighbours.

power of the Government give a check to the rapidity of this ſuperſtition, till by incloſing the tomb within a wall, they effectually obſtructed all acceſs to it [1].

This expedient, tho' it put an end to the external worſhip of the Saint, could not ſhake the credit of his miracles: diſtinct accounts of which were carefully drawn up, and diſperſed among the people, with an atteſtation of them much more ſtrong and authentic, than what has ever been alledged for the miracles of any other age, ſince the days of the Apoſtles. *Monſ. de Montgeron*, a perſon of eminent rank in *Paris*, [2] publiſhed a ſelect number of them, in a pompous volume in quarto, which he dedicated to the King and preſented to him in Perſon; being induced to the publication of them, as he declares, by the inconteſtable evidence of the facts; by which he himſelf, from a libertin and profeſſed Deiſt, became a ſincere convert to the Chriſtian faith. But beſides the collection of Mr. *de Montgeron*, ſeveral other collections were made, containing in the whole above an hundred miracles, which are all publiſhed together in three volumes, with their original vouchers, certificates, affidavits, and letters annexed to each of them at full length.

Montgeron

The greateſt part of theſe miracles were employed in the cures of deſperate diſeaſes, in their laſt and deplored ſtate, and after all human remedies had for may many years been tried upon them in vain: but the Patients no ſooner addreſſed themſelves to the tomb of this Saint, than the moſt inveterate caſes, and complications of Palſies, Apoplexies and Dropſies, and even blindneſs and lameneſs &c. were either inſtantly cured, or greatly relieved, and within a ſhort time after wholly removed. All which cures were performed in the Church-yard of St. *Medard*, in the open view of the people, and with ſo general a belief of the finger of God in them, that many *Infidels, Debauché's, Schiſmatics*, and *Heretics* are ſaid to have been converted by them to the Catholic faith. And the reality of them is atteſted by ſome of the principal Phyſicians and Surgeons in France, as well as the Clergy of the firſt dignity; ſeveral of whom were eye-witneſſes of them, who preſented a verbal proces of each to the Archbiſhops, with a petition ſigned by above twenty *Curès* or Rectors of the Pariſhes of *Paris*, deſiring that they might be authentically regiſtred, and ſolemnly publiſhed to the people, as true miracles.

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[1] This ſtep gave occaſion to the following Epigram, which was fixed upon the incloſure, in the ſtile of the Royal Edicts.

De par le Roy. Defenſe a Dieu
De faire miracles, en ce lieu.

[2] Conſeiller au Parlement de Paris.

I have ſeen an anſwer to theſe miracles by a Proteſtant writer, *Mr. Des Voeux*; who does not deny the facts, but the miraculous nature of them onely, which by many reaſons he endeavours to render ſuſpected. Yet another writer on the ſame ſide, declares, that all his reaſons are too weak, to do them any hurt; and that there is no other way of ſhaking their credit, than by ſhewing them to be the works of the Devil. Which he undertakes to prove, in three letters to the ſaid *Mr. Des Voeux*, to be the genuin character of them. Des Voeux

Let our Declamers then on the authority of the Fathers, and the faith of hiſtory, produce if they can, any evidence of the primitive miracles, half ſo ſtrong, as what is alledged for the miracles of the *Abbe de Paris:* or if they cannot do it, let them give us a reaſon, why we muſt receive the one, and reject the other: or if they fail likewiſe in this, let them be ſo ingenuous at laſt as to confeſs, that we have no other part left, but either to admit them all, or reject them all; for otherwiſe, they can never be thought to act conſiſtently. And if, from their avowed principles and blind deference to authority, we may gueſs at their real ſentiments in the preſent caſe, they will be as little ſcrupulous about the modern, as the antient miracles of the Church, but patiently admit them all; as being more agreeable to that rule, which is preſcribed by their primitive Guides; "that the true diſciples of Chriſt, *have nothing more to do with curioſity or inquiry, but when they are once become believers, their ſole buſineſs is to believe on* [1]."

Vertot

Again, The celebrated Hiſtorian, *Mr. de Vertot*, whoſe *revolutions of Rome, of Sweden and of Portugal*, afford ſo much entertainment to the public, has written a defence alſo of a certain miracle, which is imagined to do ſome honor to the Church and Kingdom of *France:* I mean the miracle of *the ſacred vial*, or *Sainte Ampoulle*, as it is called, with which their Kings are anointed at their coronation [2].

Sacred Vial

Clovis
Remigius
5th. Cent.

This Vial is ſaid to have been brought from heaven by a Dove, for the baptiſmal unction of *Clovis, the firſt Chriſtian King of France*, and dropped into the hands of St. *Remigius*, then Biſhop of *Rheims*, about the end of the fifth century: where it has been preſerved ever ſince for the purpoſe of anoint-

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[1] Nobis curioſitate non opus eſt poſt Jeſum Chriſtum, nec inquiſitione poſt Evangelium; cum credimus, nihil deſideramus ultra credere. Tertull. de Præſcript. Hæret. §. 8.

Vertot

[2] The Abbè de Vertot begins his Diſſertation on this vial, in the following manner.

"There has ſcarce ever been a more ſenſible and illuſtrious mark of the viſible protection of God, over the Monarchy of *France*, than the celebrated miracle of the ſacred vial. On the day of Great *Clovis*'s baptiſm, heaven declared itſelf in favor of that Prince and his ſucceſſors, in a particular manner; and by way of preference to all the other Sovereigns of Chriſtendom. So that we may juſtly apply to every one of our Kings, on the day of their coronation, the words of the Royal Prophet." "*God, even thy God has anointed thee with the oil of gladneſs, above thy fellows.* Diſſertat. au ſujet de la ſainte Ampoulle. —Dans les Memoires De l'Acad des Inſcript. & bell. Let. Tom. 2. p. 665.

ing all ſucceding Kings [1], and it's divine deſcent is ſaid to be confirmed by this miracle; that *as ſoon as the coronation is over, the oil in the Vial begins to waſt and vaniſh, but is conſtantly renewed of itſelf, for the ſervice of each new Coronation* [2].

The *Abbe de Vertot* defends the truth of this miracle by the authority of ſeveral witneſſes, who lived at the time of *Remigius* or near to it; and of many later writers alſo, who give teſtimony to the ſame, through each ſucceding age. Yet a learned Profeſſor at *Utrecht*, in a diſſertation upon this ſubject, treats it as a mere forgery, or pious fraud, contrived to ſupport the dignity of the *Kings and Clergy of France*; and ranks it in the ſame claſs with the *Palladium of Troy*; *the Ancilia of old Rome*; *and the Croſs, which Conſtantin pretended to ſee in the heavens*; and the reſt of thoſe political fictions, which we meet with in the hiſtories of all ages [3].

Now what will our Advocates of the primitive miracles ſay to this? Will they tell us here, as they have often done on ſimilar occaſions, that by rejecting the authority of *Mr. Vertot* and his witneſſes in this ſtory, we deſtroy the faith of all his other ſtories, and can no longer take his word for any thing, which he has related of *Rome*, or *Sweden*, or *Portugal*? Let them talk at this ſilly rate as long as they pleaſe, men of ſenſe will always know, how to diſtinguiſh in ſuch caſes; how to extract all the inſtruction, which is offered to them, in one part of his writings; yet guard themſelves from all the ſuperſtition, which is inculcated in the other. They know, that, on ſubjects of common hiſtory, a writer of ſenſe and credit can hardly have any other motive of writing, but to pleaſe and inſtruct; and to illuſtrate the truth of facts, as far as he was able, by the perſpicuity of his ſtile, and the proper diſpoſition of his materials: but on ſubjects of a miraculous kind, they know likewiſe, how forcibly the prejudices of education, a ſuperſtitious turn of mind, the intereſts of a party, or the views of ambition are apt to operate on a defender of thoſe miracles, which the government and religion of his country are engaged to ſupport.

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[1] ———Idem primus & omnes
Poſt ipſum Reges, Francorum ad ſceptra vocati,
Quando coronantur, oleo ſacrantur eodem.—ib. p. 674.

[2] ———cujus prece rorem
Miſit in ampullam cœleſtem Rector Olympi,
Corpus ut hoc lavacro Regis deberet inungi,
Deficeretque liquor, ibi corpore Regis inuncto.
Nic. de Braia. De S. Remigio.

[3] Vid. Everard Ottonis. J. C. Diſſertat. &c. §. IV. p. 365. De Unctione Remenſi. Traject. ad Rhen. quarto. 1723.

Trojani *Palladium.*—Virgilius *lapſa Ancilia cœlo*—veneratur. Conſtantinus, litteras ἐν τȣ́το νικᾷ in cœlo legiſſe fertur, &c. vid. ibid.

Theſe few inſtances are ſufficient to evince the reaſonableneſs and prudence of ſuſpending our aſſent to reports of a miraculous kind, tho' atteſted by an authority, which might ſafely be truſted, in the report of ordinary events. They teach us alſo how opinions, wholly abſurd and contrary to nature, may gain credit and eſtabliſhment through ages and nations, which, by the force of education, cuſtom, and example, have once contracted a ſuperſtitious and credulous turn: till being checked from time to time by the gradual improvements of ſcience, and the ſucceſſive efforts of reaſon, inquiring occaſionally into the uncertain grounds, and reflecting on the certain miſchiefs of them, they have fallen at laſt into ſuch utter contempt, as to make us wonder, how it was poſſible for them, ever to have obtained any credit.

But whatever be the uncertainty of antient hiſtory, there is one thing at leaſt, which we may certainly learn from it; that human nature has always been the ſame; agitated by the ſame appetites and paſſions, and liable to the ſame exceſſes and abuſes of them, in all ages and countries of the world; ſo that our experience of what paſſes in the preſent age, will be the beſt comment on what is delivered to us concerning the paſt. To apply it then to the caſe before us: there is hardly a ſingle fact, which I have charged upon the primitive times, but what we ſtill ſee performed, in one or other of the Sects of Chriſtians, of our own times. Among ſome we ſee *diſeaſes cured*; *Devils caſt out*, *and all the other miracles*, which are ſaid to have been wrought in the primitive Church: among others, we ſee the boaſted gifts of *Tertullian*'s and *Cyprian*'s days; *pretended revelations*, *prophetic viſions*, *and divine impreſſions:* now all theſe modern pretenſions we readily aſcribe to their true cauſe; to the artifices and craft of a few, playing upon the credulity, the ſuperſtition, and the enthuſiaſm of the many, for the ſake of ſome private intereſt: when we read therefore, that the ſame things were performed by the antients, and for the ſame ends, of acquiring a ſuperiority of credit, or wealth, or power, over their fellow creatures; how can we poſſibly heſitate, to impute them to the ſame cauſe, of fraud and impoſture?

In a word; to ſubmit our belief implicitely and indifferently, to the mere force of authority, in all caſes, whether miraculous or natural, without any rule of diſcerning the credible from the incredible, might ſupport indeed the faith, as it is called, but would certainly deſtroy the uſe of all hiſtory; by leading us into perpetual errors, and poſſeſſing our minds with invincible prejudices, and falſe notions both of men and things. But to diſtinguiſh between things, totally different from each other; between miracle and nature; the extrordinary acts of God, and the ordinary tranſactions of man; to ſuſpend our belief of the one, while, on the ſame teſtimony, we grant it freely to the other; and to require a different degree of evidence for each, in proportion to the different degrees of their credibility;

is ſo far from hurting the credit of hiſtory, or of any thing elſe, which we ought to believe, that it is the onely way to purge hiſtory from it's droſs, and render it beneficial to us; and by a right uſe of our reaſon and judgement, to raiſe our minds above the low prejudices, and childiſh ſuperſtitions of the credulous vulgar.

Austin

There cannot be a ſtronger proof of the ſtupid credulity and ſuperſtition of thoſe primitive ages, into which we have been inquiring, and of the facility of impoſing any fictions upon them, which their leaders thought fit to inculcate, than what is related by St. *Auſtin*, *from the report*, as he ſays, of *credible perſons*, "that at *Epheſus*, "where St. *John*, the Apoſtle, lay buried, "he was not believed to be dead, but to "be ſleeping onely in the grave, which "he had provided for himſelf, till our "Lord's ſecond coming: in proof of "which, they affirmed, that the earth, "under which he lay, was ſeen to heave "up and down perpetually, in conformity "to the motion of his body, in the act of "breathing" Which ridiculous conceit was grounded on thoſe words ſpoken by our Lord of that Apoſtle, *if I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?* Whence the other Apoſtles inferred, *that St. John ſhould not die.* [Jo. xxi. 23.] vid. Auguſtin, in loc. Oper. T. 3. p. 819, 820.

Surey Demoniac.

Dugdale

1697

Fontenelle

But we have another inſtance, in our own country, of a credulity not leſs extravagant, than what is juſt mentioned, in the caſe of a perſon believed to be poſſeſſed by the Devil; an account of which was printed and publiſhed with the following title. "The *Surey Demoniac.* Or an "account of *Satan*'s ſtrange and dreadfull "Actings, in and about the body of *Richard Dugdale*, of *Surey* near *Whalley in* "*Lancaſhire*. And how he was diſpoſſeſſed by God's bleſſing on the Faſtings "and Prayers of divers Miniſters and people. The matter of fact atteſted by the "oaths of ſeveral credible perſons, before "ſome of his Majeſty's Juſtices of the "peace in the ſaid County. London "1697."—Theſe dreadfull actings of *Satan* continued above a year: during which, there was a deſperate ſtruggle between him, and nine Miniſters of the Goſpel, who had undertaken to caſt him out; and for that purpoſe, ſucceſſively relieved each other in their dayly combats with him: while *Satan*, as in the days of *Tertullian*, tried all his arts to baffle their attempts; inſulting them with ſcoffs and raillery; puzzling them ſometimes, with Latin and Greek, and threatning them with the effects of his vengeance; till he was finally vanquiſhed and put to flight by the perſevering prayers and faſtings of the ſaid Miniſters: the truth of which fact is more ſubſtantially atteſted, than any caſe of the ſame kind, in all the primitive ages. *Monſ. de Fontenelle*, a writer juſtly celebrated for his admirable parts and learning, ſpeaking of the origin and progreſs of theſe popular ſuperſtitions, ſays, "Give "me but half a dozen perſons, whom I "can perſuade, that it is not the ſun, "which makes our day light, and I "ſhould not deſpair of drawing whole "nations to embrace the ſame belief. "For how ridiculous ſoever the opinion "be, let it be ſupported onely for a certain time, and the buſineſs is done; for "when it once becomes antient, it is ſufficiently proved."—Hiſt. des oracles. c. xi.

REMARKS

ON

TWO PAMPHLETS

Lately publiſhed againſt

Dr. *Middleton*'s *Introductory Diſcourſe.*

The ONE, intituled,

OBSERVATIONS on that DISCOURSE in anſwer to
the Author's Prejudices, *&c.*

The OTHER,

The JESUIT-CABAL farther opened,

OR

A Defence of Dr. *Chapman*'s late Charge, *&c.*

With a PREFACE to theſe REMARKS,

Giving a brief Account, of a certain Book, which profeſſes to exhibit a full, true, and comprehenſive
View of CRISTIANITY, *&c.*

As it was taught and practiſed by the Univerſal Church, during
the firſt Four CENTURIES.

With ſome occaſional Reflections on the ſaid Book.

PREFACE.

I Have lately met with a certain book, which, though written without any reference to Dr. *Middleton*'s *Introductory Diſcourſe*, and with a view quite oppoſite to it, is yet ſo particularly connected with the ſubject of it, and conſequently, with the preſent debate, which is grounded upon it, that I have thought it neceſſary, on this occaſion, to give the reader a ſhort abſtract of it, as a proper preface or introduction to the following remarks.

The purpoſe of it, as it is declared by the Title-page, is, "To give a true and comprehenſive view of Chriſtianity; or to "ſet forth the complete duty of a Chriſtian, in relation to faith, "practice, worſhip and rituals, without regard to any modern "Church, Sect or Party; as it is taught in the holy Scrip"tures, was delivered by the Apoſtles, and received by the uni"verſal Church of Chriſt during *the firſt four centuries.* The "whole laid down in two Catechiſms; the firſt, for the uſe "of Children; the ſecond, of more knowing Chriſtians."

Now when a controverſy was actually on foot, concerning the principles and characters of the primitive Fathers; and a quæſtion moved among Divines, whether they were the moſt favorable to the Popiſh or to the Proteſtant cauſe, nothing could come out more appoſite to the purpoſe, or more effectual towards the deciſion of it, than a performance of this kind; ſetting forth by a deduction of facts and inſtances, what were the genuin doctrines and practices of thoſe antient Fathers, during *the four firſt centuries* of the Chriſtian Church. This book therefore I would recommend to the attention of the reader: For this will inable him to judge, of the real merit of *the Introductory Diſcourſe*, which has been attacked and decried by ſeveral writers, and eſpecially by theſe two, with whom I am now engaged.

The Author of theſe Catechiſms, appears to be a man of ſenſe and learning; warmly perſuaded of the truth and importance of what he delivers; and delivering it with much piety and gravity, and with more candor, than we commonly obſerve in writers of his zeal and principles. The plan alſo of Chriſtianity, which he has propoſed to us, ſeems to be a fair and juſt repreſentation of the diſcipline of the primitive Church, or of ſuch a part at leaſt, as he thinks fit to recommend to the practice of the preſent age. And if we grant him his main principle, that *unwritten tradition*, as it is exemplified by the univerſal practice of the antient Fathers and Churches, is of *Apoſtolic Origin*, we muſt grant likewiſe, that all the rites and doctrines, which he has deduced from it, are the eſſential parts of the Chriſtian religion, and of equal obligation with the Goſpel itſelf. Yet on the whole, this learned, candid, and pious performance will be found, upon examination, to confirm every thing, that Dr. *Middleton* has any where ſaid, concerning the danger of adopting the diſcipline of thoſe primitive ages, as a pattern or rule of duty to Proteſtants.

His ſcheme in general is this: that true religion conſiſts, in believing and practiſing every thing, which God has revealed to us, either *by his written word or unwritten tradition*; *both which are known to be God's word by the evidence of the Catholic Church* [1]. He declares tradition to be, *that ſacred depoſitum of doctrine and practice which was delivered by Chriſt to the Apoſtles*; *by the Apoſtles*,

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[1] P. 151.

to the firſt Biſhops; and by them, to their ſucceſſors and Prieſts, of the univerſal Church, from age to age. [1] *That all* points of doctrine and diſcipline, which were *antiently and univerſally received by Chriſtians, without any known beginning, have always been looked upon, as Apoſtolic traditions:* that *this conſentient practice of the Catholic Church, is the teſt, by which true traditions are diſtinguiſhed from falſe* [2], that theſe traditions may be called *the common law of the Church*; and the decrees of Councils, *it's ſtatute-law:* and that no Church can be rightly conſtituted, *which does not obſerve them, or has any laws contradictory to them* [3].

He defines the Church to be, *the Society of all the faithful, who profeſs to ſerve God, according to that true religion, which God himſelf taught, and which they received from their fore-fathers, and have faithfully preſerved without alteration:* that the marks of the true Church are four; It is *one, holy, Catholic, and Apoſtolic*; preſerving the doctrine of the Apoſtles, by a continued ſucceſſion of Paſtors, derived originally from them [4]. Which ſucceſſion we know to have been *uninterrupted, from the times of the Apoſtles, down to the preſent* [1]*:* that if it *ſhould ever once fail, it would be impoſſible to renew it, without the miraculous interpoſition of Chriſt himſelf: for if the whole Chriſtian world ſhould unite their ſuffrages together, they could not give any authority, to offer the ſacrifice of the Euchariſt, or to perform any other part of the paſtoral office in the Church, it being a power, which Chriſt has reſerved to himſelf* [2].

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[1] 142.

[2] 152.

[3] P. 191, 192.

[4] 161, 162.

These are the ſame marks of the true Church, which the Papiſts have always alledged againſt the Proteſtants, as being found in their Church, and not in any Proteſtant Church. Thus in a ſhort treatiſe on this very ſubject, publiſhed by an able Popiſh writer, in the beginning of Q. *Elizabeth*'s reign, and when the ſettlement of religion was under the deliberation of the Parliament, the author concludes his argument in theſe words. "To "be ſhort, the Church of Proteſtants is "not *One*, for lack of one head: not *Holy*, for lack of benefits: not *Catholic*, "becauſe it hath not indured at all times, "places, and perſons: not *Apoſtolic*, be"cauſe they cannot ſhew their ſucceſſion "from the Apoſtles downward, nor can "go upward lineally to the Apoſtles, "which thing is plain. Therefore the "Church called Papiſtical, having one "head, the Pope, having benefits of "God, by floriſhing, and miracles, be"ing ſpread at all times, in all places, "through all perſons, that is to ſay, for "the moſt part, being able to ſhew their "pedigree, even to the Apoſtles, without "any interruption; that Church, I ſay, "is the onely true Church, whereof we "make mention in our Belief, ſaying, I "believe the Holy Catholic Church." See *Strype*'s Annals of Q. *Eliz.* Append. p. 36.

That this univerſal Church, as it is now militant on earth, is made up of all the particular faithful Churches; of each of which the Biſhop is the viſible head. *That a particular faithfull Church conſiſts of a rightful Biſhop, with his Clergy and laity united to him, profeſſing the true faith, without the addition of falſe doctrine, and practiſing the neceſſary Chriſtian worſhip, without corruption.* Hence flows the neceſſity of living and dying in the communion of the Church, out of which ſalvation is not ordinarily to be had. For we cannot be united to Chriſt, *without communicating with the holy Catholic Church, and the onely means of communicating with the Catholic Church, is, by being members of a particular faithfull Church* [3].

To this general view of his primary and fundamental principles, I ſhall now add a ſummary account of the chief articles of that pure and primitive Chriſtianity, which he has built upon them.

To begin then with the ſacraments. In the office of Baptiſm, he preſcribes, as neceſſary to the due adminiſtration of it, all the ſame ceremonies, which are now actually practiſed by the *Romiſh* Church, tho' with ſome little alteration, or the addition rather of more foppery and ſuperſtition, than is to be found even in the Popiſh ritual. The perſon, to be baptiſed, muſt in the firſt place be *exorciſed* by the Prieſt, by *blowing thrice upon his face, ſigning him with the ſign of the Croſs, and pronouncing a certain form of authoritative words, commanding the Devil to depart out of him.* He next makes a *ſolemn renunciation of the Devil; and a vow of perpetual obedience to Chriſt:* in which renunciation, *he muſt turn his face to the Weſt, as being oppoſite to the region of light, and repreſenting the Prince of darkneſs, whom he renounces:* but in making his vow to Chriſt, he muſt *turn again to the Eaſt, where Paradiſe was planted, which is now again laid open to him:* then he muſt be *anointed on the head and ſhoulders with holy oil, conſecrated for that purpoſe by the Biſhop,* to inable, him, to wreſtle the more ſucceſsfully with the Devil: then he is to be *plunged three times under water; once at the name of each perſon of the bleſſed Trinity; to repreſent the faith, into which he is baptiſed; and alſo the three days burial of Chriſt, and his reſurrection on the third day;* with ſeveral other myſtical ſenſes, there ſpecified: after this, he muſt be anointed again with *holy Chriſm,* or a compound of oil and balm, conſecrated by the Biſhop; and is to be cloathed *with a white Garment,* the emblem of that purity, to which he has devoted his life: then he receives *the kiſs of peace,* in token of his incorporation into the Church: and laſtly is made to taſt *of conſecrated milk and honey,* to denote his ſpiritual infancy, and his entrance into the land of reſt, of *which Canaan, the land of promiſe, flowing with milk and honey, was a type* [1].

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[1] P. 151. [2] 282. [3] P. 162.

As to the Euchariſt, the *true and full notion of it,* he ſays, is this; that it is *a religious feaſt upon bread, and wine mixed with water, which have firſt been offered in ſacrifice to God, and are become the myſterious body and blood of Chriſt* [2]. He affirms it to be, a *real and proper ſacrifice*; and calls ſacrifice in general, the moſt *perfect, efficacious, and honorable ſervice,* that we can pay to God [1]; and the particular ſacrifice of the Euchariſt, *the moſt excellent worſhip, which God ever preſcribed to men* [2]*:* which by its *purgative and expiatory nature procures a general remiſſion of ſin for the whole Church, and atones likewiſe for the wilfull tranſgreſſions of particular ſinners:* of which ſacrifice, Chriſt, at the time of the inſtitution, *conſecrated his Apoſtles to be the Prieſts,* with a power of conſecrating others to ſuccede them, and carry on the ſame Prieſthood to the end of the world [3].

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[1] P. 227, &c. 232.

[2] P. 240.

The ſacramental part of the Euchariſt, *is the Feaſt upon this ſacrifice of the body and blood of Chriſt; which being offered to God upon the Altar by the Prieſt, is conſumed afterwards in common by the Prieſt and People by eating and drinking; for it was made too holy a thing by it's conſecration, to be treated as the antient ſacrifices were, or to be laid on the fire in whole or in part, but was to be conſumed intirely, in the moſt honorable manner, that is, to be eaten and drunk by the faithful, in an act of moſt ſolemn devotion.* He declares, *that as Chriſt, by the words of the inſtitution, made the bread and the cup to be his body and blood, in type and figure, ſo God, by his acceptance of this moſt excellent ſacrifice, cauſed the Holy Spirit to give it the higheſt degree of ſanctity, of which any ſacrifice is capable, and to make it the very body and blood of Chriſt, in real power and energy, and to all intents and purpoſes of religion, or as far as it was poſſible for one thing to be made another, without changing the ſubſtance.* And this he ſays, *was the certain and univerſal belief of the Antients, that as the natural body of Chriſt was formed in the womb of the bleſſed Virgin, by the overſhadowing of the Holy Ghoſt, ſo, by the operation of the ſame Spirit, the bread and the cup were made*

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[1] 250. [2] 240, 279. [3] 267, 268, 270.

his body and blood in a more effectual manner, than as mere repreſentatives [1].

He affirms alſo, that the contents of the Euchariſtic cup, muſt neceſſarily be wine, *mixed with water*; and employs four intire chapters, to prove this mixture to be *of divine inſtitution*; and that it was the univerſal doctrine of the Catholic Church, for above 1500 years, *that our Saviour practiſed, inſtituted and commanded the mixed cup; and made water therefore, as well as wine, an eſſential ingredient* [2]. Laſtly, he largely and ſtrongly inſiſts on the duty and neceſſity *of Infant-communion*, or of bringing all infants, even of the tendereſt age, to partake of this ſacrifice: which he enforces by a ſimilar practice both of the *Jews* and Gentiles, and the parity of thoſe arguments, which are alledged for Infant-baptiſm; and, above all, by the conſtant practice of the primitive Church through the three firſt centuries, which he deduces very particularly in ſeveral diſtinct chapters [3]. After the celebration of the Euchariſt, he recommends the revival of the *Agape, or Love-feaſt* of the primitive Chriſtians; which was a common entertainment, provided out of the voluntary oblations of the richer communicants, in order to feed the poorer: and was held, he ſays, *for above three centuries and an half, within the Church*; and tho' prohibited afterwards in Churches, continued ſtill to be held in private houſes; as an *uſefull and laudable rite, and not onely of Apoſtolic origin, but of great ſervice to the Chriſtian Church* [4].

To theſe two ſacraments of the Goſpel, the Church of *Rome* has added *five*, but this Proteſtant Catechiſt, *ten*; which he calls *leſſer Sacraments.* Five of them belonging to Baptiſm;

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[1] P. 285, 296, 297.

[2] 315, &c.

[3] P. 367.

[4] 393, &c.

Exorciſm, anointing with oil, the white garment, a taſt of milk and honey, and the unction by holy Chriſm: the other five are, *the ſign of the Croſs, Impoſition of hands, the Unction of the ſick, Holy Orders and Matrimony* [1]. The three laſt of theſe are held alſo as ſacraments by the *Romiſh* Church, together with *confirmation and penance,* but inſtead of *confirmation,* this writer introduces, *impoſition of hands,* which they call the *outward ſign of it:* and though he does not make a ſacrament of *Penance,* yet he enjoins it, as a neceſſary duty to all Chriſtians; with private confeſſion alſo to a Prieſt, which the *Romaniſts* reckon, as the outward ſign of it [2]. And in truth, all his *leſſer ſacraments,* are nothing elſe but ſo many *Popiſh* ceremonies, now actually practiſed by that Church; which, upon the authority of tradition and the primitive Fathers, he declares to be ſo eſſential, that *it is not in the power of the univerſal Church, to alter or lay them aſide* [3]. And as *to the ſign of the Croſs,* tho' the *Romaniſts* make uſe of it in all their Sacraments, and preſcribe it likewiſe in all the offices of private life, declaring it, as this author alſo does, to have wrought many miracles, yet Popiſh ſuperſtition never reached ſo far, as to advance it to a Sacrament.

As to the other parts of our worſhip due to God, he preſcribes a conſtant attendance on the public and daily ſervice of the Church, *every morning and evening, and on the penitential offices, peculiar to Wedneſdays and Fridays;* which appear, he ſays, *from Tradition, to have been days appointed for divine worſhip by the Apoſtles, as well as Sundays.* And beſides theſe ſtated times, he requires us to attend alſo devoutly, *on the public prayers of the Church at Baptiſm, Confirmation and Ordination; at Matrimony, the Churching of women, and burial of the dead; at the conſecration*

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[1] P. 224. [2] 410, &c. [3] P. 195.

of oil, the milk, the honey and the Chriſm; *and at all the other benedictions, and Eccleſiaſtical prayers,* which are ſaid over different perſons and things on different occaſions: becauſe all theſe Offices were compoſed *by great ſaints, out of the words of ſcripture, and preſerved by antient tradition, and deſigned to ſanctify all our actions, and uſe of all the creatures.*

As to our private devotions and prayers, beſides the morning and night, he preſcribes a repetition of them, *every third hour of the day*; *at nine in the forenoon, twelve at noon, and three in the afternoon*; as being the fixed times of performing them, *during the three firſt centuries:* and he recommends it to thoſe zealous Chriſtians of *heroic piety, who would imitate holy* David; Paul *and* Silas, to extend their devotions alſo to *the third hour of the night:* according to which diviſion of the day and night into equal ſpaces of three hours each, all the returning times of prayer have acquired the following Latin names in the Romiſh Church; *Prime or Matins, in the morning*: *Tierce, at nine, or the third hour: Sexte, at noon, or the ſixth hour: None, at three, or the ninth hour: Veſpers, at ſix, in the evening: Compline, at nine at night: Nocturns, at midnight: and Lauds, at three in the morning*, or the *time of Cock-crowing*. To which *Heroic* pitch of devotion, as he calls it, no Chriſtians of theſe later days have had the preſumption to aſpire, or the honor to reach, except ſome Monkiſh orders of the Popiſh Church, or a few wild Enthuſiaſts, or crafty zealots, heroically ambitious of the honor of a Saintſhip. But to give ſome eaſe however under ſo laborious a devotion, to Chriſtians eſpecially engaged in buſineſs, he obſerves, that, if they frequent the public offices of the Church, *their devotions at theſe hours may be very ſhort*; and propoſes to them *the ſign of the Croſs*, made with this form of words, *in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt.*

Ghoſt. Amen: As the ſhorteſt and moſt ſignificant of all prayers: becauſe we confeſs by it, *the myſtery of the Trinity; and, by the motion of our hand, expreſs the figure of the Croſs, or the myſtery of our redemption, with that alſo of the incarnation, on which it depends* [1]. Laſtly, in the act of praying, whether public or private, he directs us, to turn our faces *towards the Eaſt, according to antient tradition,* and adds ſeveral reaſons, which were alledged for it by the Primitive Fathers [2].

He affirms likewiſe, upon the ſame authority, the duty of *praying for the faithfull deceaſed:* that *as the Saints in Paradiſe pray for us, ſo we ought to pray for all thoſe, who departed in the faith,* but cannot attain the completion of their happineſs, 'till the final day of judgement. That we ſhould pray even *for the forgiveneſs of their ſins:* for their preſent ſeparate ſtate being the conſequence and puniſhment of Sin, and a ſtate of imperfection, in which the ſoul is capable of improvement, it follows, *that prayers and alms and Euchariſtic ſacrifices offered for them in the Church, may increaſe the bleſſedneſs of their intermediate ſtate, and prevail for the abatement of thoſe rigors, which they might otherwiſe ſuffer in the conflagration of the laſt day* [3].

All theſe ſacramental rites and offices of devotion, which I have hitherto recited, are deduced by him from what he calls, *the common law of the Church*; that is, the practice and cuſtom of primitive Antiquity: but he has collected alſo from it's *Statute-law,* or the decrees of Councils, *ſix particular Commands of the Church,* as he calls them, which he injoins to all Chriſtians, as of equal obligation.

The firſt command is, *to abſtain from eating blood.* Which he declares to have been obſerved *by the holy Church throughout the*

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[1] P. 175. [2] 176. [3] P. 164.

world, even to the tenth century; and that it is laid upon all Chriſtians, *by the law of God, and the tradition and Canons of the primitive Church, to eat of no animal, but what is ſo killed, that the blood of it may be naturally poured out* [1].

The ſecond is, *to offer to God our tithes, firſt fruits, and voluntary oblations.* This he calls *a neceſſary branch of divine worſhip*, and declares, that God had appropriated to himſelf *our tithes*, or the tenth part of our ſubſtance, *from the beginning of the world: and that the oblation of our firſt fruits is commanded alſo by the Holy Ghoſt*, and in all religions, ages, and countries of the world, was ever eſteemed a part of divine worſhip. But beſides *our tithes and firſt fruits*, which are due by the divine law, God expects from us alſo *voluntary oblations*; in the meaſure of which however he leaves us at our liberty; *yet the more we offer, the more acceptably we ſerve him.* Theſe are to be paid to his ſervants and receivers, the Prieſts; tho' not for their own uſe, but to be depoſited in the hands of the Biſhop, *as a ſtanding treaſury, for the ſupport of the Church, the maintenance of the Clergy, and the relief of the poor, of which the Biſhop is to have the diſpoſal, as being Chriſt's vicar, the prime ſteward of God's revenues, and the chief maſter of his houſehold* [2].

The third is, *to obſerve the Feſtivals of the Church.* Theſe are divided into the greater and leſſer. The greater are, *Eaſter-day, the firſt Sunday after Eaſter, Aſcenſion-day, Whit-ſunday, all the Sundays of the year and Chriſtmaſs-day* [3]. The leſſer are, *all the days between Eaſter and Whitſunday, except Sundays: in which we ſolemnize our Saviour's reſurrection for fifty days ſucceſſively, during which time all faſts are ſuſpended, and we are to pray ſtanding, as on all Sundays, in token of joy, and thereby make every one of theſe days equal in a manner to Sundays.* All *Saturdays or Sabbaths likewiſe, except that before Eaſter, are leſſer Feaſts*, having been ſanctified by God from the creation of the world, and in memory of that, continued to be obſerved by the primitive Chriſtians, *as Feſtivals of devotion. Monday alſo and Tueſday after Whitſunday, the Circumciſion, Epiphany, the Purification and Annuntiation of the bleſſed Virgin*, and all the other *Saints days*, marked in our preſent Calendars, are in the number of his *leſſer Feſtivals* [1].

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[1] P. 204.

[2] 205.

[3] 208.

The fourth is, *to obſerve the Faſts of the Church:* which are divided alſo into the greater and leſſer. The greater are *holy Saturday, or the day before Eaſter*; which the Primitive Chriſtians kept with *a vigil and Pernoctation*, in memory of our Lord's reſurrection, which happened early the next morning; about which time they expected alſo his ſecond coming. The next Faſt in ſtrictneſs is *Good Friday*, the preceding day; on which our Lord was crucified. But the primitive Church joined them both together, *as one Faſt of forty hours, and kept it as an Evangelic command.* The other greater Faſts are the *other four preceding days of the ſame week before Eaſter*, as preparatory to the more ſtrict and ſolemn obſervance *of Good Friday and Holy Saturday.* The leſſer Feaſts are, *the Stations, and Lent.* The *Stations* are, *all the Wedneſdays and Fridays of the Year*; being weekly commemorations, *of our Lord's being ſold by Judas on Wedneſday, and crucified on Friday*; and are called *Stations*, in alluſion *to military ſtations and keeping guard.* The uſe of theſe Faſts is, *to puniſh ourſelves for our ſins, by ſuffering hunger and thirſt, depriving ourſelves of our pleaſures, and even of a part of our neceſſary nouriſhment. For by mortifying of the fleſh and weakening the body, we mortify the mind, and diſpoſe it the better for prayer, compunction, and ſerious thoughts* [2].

The fifth is, *to offer and receive the Euchariſt, on every holy day*; at leaſt, *on all the greater Feſtivals:* which relaxation the Church indulged, he ſays, *that ſhe might ſecure a weekly celebration of it on all Sundays, beſides the Aſcenſion and Chriſtmaſs-days:* which is the leaſt, that is required of all Chriſtians, *both by ſcripture and tradition: and thoſe, who willfully omit it on the Lord's day, do virtually excommunicate themſelves for a time* [1].

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[1] P. 209. [2] 210.

The ſixth command of the Church is *to pray ſtanding on all Sundays, and on every day, between Eaſter and Whit-ſunday*, out of reſpect and remembrance of our Lord's reſurrection, which was obſerved by all Churches, from the beginning, on the authority *of Apoſtolic tradition*, and eſpecially enforced, *by the 20th Canon of the firſt great Council of Nice.* A. D. 325. the poſture of kneeling is adapted onely to occaſions of humiliation and penitential devotion, but that of ſtanding, he ſays, *is a beautifull ſymbolic repreſentation of our Lord's reſurrection*; proper to raiſe our thoughts from the earth, and to unite them more cloſely with God, and the things above: and no ceremony of the Church can be more efficacious for the purpoſe of elevating the mind, and inflaming the affections, and ſtirring up the faculties of the ſoul [2].

As to the honors which were paid to *the Martyrs* by the Primitive Churches, he informs us, " that their *reliques or the re-" mains of their bodies* were carefully preſerved and embalmed " and wrapped up in rich cloaths, and the very drops of their " blood gathered up. That, on the days of their Martyrdoms, " the Chriſtians uſed to meet together, to celebrate their me-" mories and honor their nativity, as they called it, or their " entrance into eternal life: that they made theſe days Feſtivals, " like Sundays, and aſſembled at their Tombs, to thank God " for their example, and to excite one another to imitate it, " by reading their acts, and the hiſtory of their ſufferings: and

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[1] P. 217. [2] 219.

" that God worked miracles at their Tombs, and often at their " Martyrdoms, by which ſeveral perſons preſent and even their " executioners and Judges had ſometimes been converted [1]."

His account likewiſe of the origin of Monkery, in the primitive ages, is this, " that from the beginnings of Chriſtianity, " there were certain perſons in the Church, called *Aſcetics,* who, " from a deſire of attaining to a greater perfection, than that " of common Chriſtians, profeſſed to exerciſe themſelves in " great auſterities, after the example of *John Baptiſt.* Theſe " exerciſes were, to abſtain wholly from fleſh and wine; to " faſt for two or three days ſucceſſively; to ſpend their time " chiefly in devotion; to give up themſelves and their ſubſtance " to the ſervice of God and the uſe of the poor and diſtreſſed, " confining themſelves to a ſingle life, and making themſelves " Eunuchs for the kingdom of Heaven, inuring themſelves to " great hardſhips, watchings, ſleeping on the ground, for " the promotion, of piety and religion: all which ſeverities " were voluntary, and exerciſed without any compulſive rules.

" But about the middle of the third century, in a time of " perſecution, great numbers, to avoid the fury of it, fled into the deſerts of *Ægypt,* where they employed themſelves in " acts of piety. and divine contemplations; and found that " ſort of life ſo agreeable, that when the perſecution ceaſed, " they choſe to continue ſtill in that ſolitary ſtate, whence they " came to be called *Monks.* They lived at firſt in little cells or " cottages, which they built for themſelves: but towards *the " middle of the fourth century they were brought to live in communities, and under rules by St. Pachomius*; who procured Monaſteries to be built for them about *Thebais:* and many holy perſons, who were deſirous to keep up the exact practice of the

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[1] P. 146.

" Chriſtian religion, which they ſaw declining, choſe this kind " of life. They ſpent their time in manual labor, and in meditating on the holy ſcripture; faſted every day 'till towards " the evening, and then ſeldom taſted any thing more, than " bread and water: they aſſembled together to pray at the " evening and in the night; ſlept little, kept a profound ſilence, practiſed all ſorts of virtues, and lived in perfect obedience to their ſuperiors, though there were ſometimes *ſeveral thouſands of them* under one Governor, for in a ſhort time " they multiplied exceedingly [1].

" From the ſame beginnings and in the ſame manner, were " formed alſo the primitive ſocieties of *religious virgins or nuns*; " who practiſed the ſame auſterities, of *ſilence*, *poverty*, *watchings, and continual prayer:* and there were ſeveral ſaints, " who drew up rules for the Monaſtic life of both the ſexes; " which ſoon ſpread through all Chriſtendom; for *St. Martin* " *of Tours* brought it into *France in the fourth century*; and *Pelagius* is ſuppoſed to have brought it into *England*, *about the* " *beginning of the fifth* [2]."

From this ſhort ſketch of the Chriſtian duties, deduced at large by this author, from the united authority of *Scripture and tradition*, the reader will eaſily perceive, what would be the conſequence, of admitting them, as a *rule of faith and practice to Proteſtants*.

For in the firſt place; the neceſſity of a Prieſthood, derived by a lineal deſcent from the Apoſtles, if acknowledged by all Chriſtians, as it is affirmed by this writer, would create incurable diſorders in all Proteſtant communities. According to this principle, if the Prieſthood ſhould once fail, the whole Chriſtian worſhip would be diſſolved at once, without the poſſibility of a renewal, but by a new commiſſion or revelation from heaven. Now *this uninterrupted ſucceſſion of Prieſts* is allowed to the Church of *Rome*, but denied by many to the Church of *England*, and not ſo much as pretended to, by any other Church or Sect of Proteſtants whatſoever: among whom conſequently, neither the Chriſtian Sacraments, nor any part of the paſtoral office can be adminiſtred, without a ſacrilegious profanation, and impious defiance of Chriſt himſelf. How forcibly then would any ſcruples of this kind operate on weak and religious minds, towards driving them into the arms of that Church, in which alone, they could be ſure of receiving the abſolution of their ſin, from the hands of an Apoſtolic Confeſſor.

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[1] P. 147. [2] 149.

Secondly, From this plan of primitive Chriſtianity we may obſerve, how tradition, inſtead of ſerving to that uſe, which is more peculiarly aſcribed to it, of adding light and illuſtration to the obſcurer parts of the goſpel, ſerves onely to perplex and obſcure it the more, by multiplying quæſtions, ingrafting new doctrines upon it, clogging it with tireſome ceremonies, and converting it from a rational, to a ritual, ſervice. The article of *the Euchariſt* will confirm this reflection. Our Lord's inſtitution of it, as it is related by all the Evangeliſts, is comprized in a few words, in which he preſcribes *a ſolemn and religious commemoration of his death and ſufferings*, to be perpetually obſerved in his Church: the frequent celebration of which, by a natural tendency and effect, could not fail to excite, in all his faithfull diſciples, a warm affection and zeal for the memory of their Maſter, and confirm their reſolutions of living conformably to his precepts. But tradition is no ſooner called in, to the interpretation of it, than it envelopes it preſently in clouds of myſtic darkneſs; transforms it into *a proper and propitiatory ſacrifice, offered for the dead, as well as the living*;

living; declares the materials of it, the bread and wine, as ſoon as conſecrated by the Prieſt, to be no longer mere repreſentatives, or types of Chriſt's body and blood, but converted, by the operation of the holy Spirit, into the ſame thing with Chriſt himſelf, in power and energy, and to all intents and purpoſes of religion, tho' in myſtery, not in ſubſtance. It mingles the Euchariſt cup alſo, with *wine and water*, tho' by the words of the inſtitution, it appears to have had nothing in it but wine, and affirms *this mixture to be of divine appointment*, tho' there be not the leaſt mention of it in any part of the Goſpel. And, to make this ſacred office ſtill more burthenſome, it injoins to us, as a neceſſary duty, to bring all infants, even of the tendereſt age, to partake of it; a practice, which muſt needs diſturb the ſolemnity of it, and diſſipate the attention, of all who aſſiſt at it. And declares this Sacrament, not onely to be *neceſſary to ſalvation*; but *a means, by which a principle of an happy reſurrection is conveyed into our bodies* [1].

Thus the *true and full notion*, as he calls it, of *the Euchariſt*, delivered originally by our Lord, within the compaſs of two or three verſes, when dreſſed out in all the trimmings, with which tradition has equipped it, takes up *an hundred and fifty pages, or about eighty intire chapters of this Author's larger Catechiſm*. He apologizes indeed for his prolixity on this article, on the account of its importance, and *the many controverſies, which have ariſen about it in the Chriſtian Church*; *and becauſe the whole of our religion may fairly be ſummed up in it* [2]: for there is no other article, he ſays, *which requires more pains and ſtudy to be rightly informed in, and that to believe it is indeed a work of labor* [3]. But this very apology for the length of his doctrine, ſeems to be a confutation of the truth of it. For it is

[1] P. 287. [2] P. 393. [3] 311.

certain, that an inſtitution, which cannot be explaned without ſo much learned pains, could never be deſigned for the moſt excellent part of a worſhip, which was calculated for the common ſalvation of all men; or that tradition at leaſt cannot be the proper interpreter of it, which makes it ſo difficult to be underſtood, that it is *a labor to believe it.*

Thirdly, We may obſerve alſo, from this ſame book, what is notorious likewiſe in the Romiſh Church, that tradition, wherever it is admitted into a partnerſhip of authority with the Scriptures, inſtead of ſerving as it's handmaid, as ſome of our Divines affect to call it, has always acted the Miſtreſs, taken the lead, and got the aſcendant ſo far, as to eclipſe the credit of the written word, reduce it as it were to a dead letter, and even baniſh it at laſt from the uſe of the people. Thus in *the primitive Catechiſm* now before us, among all the various rites and doctrines, laid down as eſſential to Chriſtians, for every ſingle one, derived immediately from the Goſpel, we may reckon twenty, I dare ſay, deduced intirely from tradition.

Fourthly, We may now ſee, from a clear deduction of facts and inſtances, as they are ſet forth in this piece, how directly the authority of the primitive Fathers and their traditions tends to lead us into the Church of *Rome:* we ſee it aſcribing a ſupreme and independent power to the Church; aſſerting the Popiſh ſacraments; a propitiatory ſacrifice of Chriſt's body and blood, both for the living and the dead; prayers for the dead, to procure ſome relief and improvement of their intermediate ſtate; Exorciſms, Chriſms, conſecrated oil, ſign of the Croſs, penances, confeſſions to a Prieſt, abſolutions, reliques of Saints; Monks; the preference of a ſingle life, to the married. as of gold to ſilver; in ſhort almoſt every thing, now practiſed or profeſſed by the Romaniſts;

except *the univerſal ſupremacy* of the Pope, which is diſputed by the Papiſts themſelves; *the divine worſhip of Saints*, which they alſo diſavow and endeavour to elude; and abſolute tranſubſtantiation; towards which however he has gone as far, as he could poſſibly do, while he retains the name of a Proteſtant: but tho' that character obliged him, to keep as clear of Popery, as he was able, yet tradition, we ſee, has carried him to the very confines, and prepared him as it were to ſtep into it, whenever a proper occaſion ſhould invite. For I could never conſider theſe plans of primitive Chriſtianity, when publiſhed by Proteſtants, in any other light, than as preliminary articles, offered to the Romiſh Church, as the ground for a treaty of peace and reconciliation, in which the few remaining points of difference might eaſily be accommodated. Which vain project of an union with *Rome*, has ever been the fond wiſh of all thoſe zealots of our Church, who draw their religious principles from the ſource of primitive Antiquity.

I am a perfect ſtranger to the author of this piece, nor have any other knowledge of his character, than what has been ſignified to me by his writings, and the report of common fame. The warm expreſſions of piety and devotion, which run through his whole performance, oblige me to think him an honeſt man; as I take every one to be, who governs himſelf by a virtuous principle, or believes, that he does ſo, tho' he be deceived in the choice, or the application of that principle. Fame alſo has informed me, that he lives up to the character, which his book points out to us: practiſes what he profeſſes; and is an example of that diſcipline, which he preſcribes to others: that he is a Proteſtant Prieſt; yet a ſeparatiſt from the communion of our Proteſtant Church; diſaffected to it's preſent conſtitution, and conſequently to the preſent government,

ment, on which it's ſecurity depends. This is the real character which his writings ſuggeſt: this, the natural courſe of his principles, when frankly avowed, and puſhed to their full length. Principles, which, among Proteſtants, will ever produce the worſt fruit, when they take root in the beſt minds; will corrupt the pureſt heart; make even the ſincerity of men dangerous to ſociety, and transform a pious, zealous Chriſtian, into an enemy to his country.

Yet theſe are the principles, which the *Chapmans, the Berrimans, the Stebbings* are ſo zealouſly aſſerting and recommending to this Proteſtant Kingdom. Dr. *Chapman*, as we ſhall ſee in the following Remarks, when driven by unanſwerable teſtimonies, to give up the character of any antient Father, as favorable to the Popiſh cauſe, takes refuge in *the collective body of them, and the conſentient practice of the primitive Churches*, as the proper *armoury*, or bulwark of Proteſtantiſm: on which ſame foundation, this Catechiſm, which I have been conſidering, is profeſſedly grounded. From this therefore every one may now learn, what a ſort of Proteſtantiſm it is, which the authority of thoſe antients, and the zeal of theſe moderns would finally impoſe upon us: A Proteſtantiſm compounded of *fanatical Enthuſiaſm, and Popiſh Superſtition*; giving itſelf up to an implicit ſubmiſſion to Church authority; baniſhing every thing rational out of it's doctrine and diſcipline; placing the principal ſervice of God, in ritual obſervances, and Monkiſh devotions; and obliged to adopt, as *divine or Apoſtolic*, every whim and abſurdity, which, through the credulity, bigottry, policy, or private intereſts of any leading Churchmen, had inſinuated itſelf into the Chriſtian worſhip, within the compaſs of the firſt four hundred years.

REMARKS

REMARKS

ON

OBSERVATIONS, &c.

UPON my firſt and haſty peruſal of theſe *Anonymous Obſervations*, I could not help conſidering them as the work of ſome ſly unbeliever, who under the maſk of zeal for the honour of the Goſpel, and a pretence of fears and jealouſies, from the freedom of *the Introductory Diſcourſe*, was craftily pointing out every topic and paſſage of it, which, by any art or force, could be ſtrained to the advantage of the Infidel cauſe.

He begins early, to drop his ſuſpicions, *that ſomething bad lay at the bottom, which had excited the Author to this undertaking*; [1] and as he advances forward, takes occaſion to declare, *that the Author muſt either renounce his argument or the Goſpel*; [2] *that thoſe, who believe the Fathers of the ſecond and third Centuries to be more credulous, than thoſe of the fourth, may fancy the Apoſtles to have been more credulous than them all.* [3] *That if the world was ſo credulous, immediately after the Apoſtles, it will not be eaſy to comprehend, how it ſhould have been much leſs ſo, in the Apoſtles times*; [4] *that the Author's charge indeed ſtops with the Fathers, but that his arguments do not ſtop there*; [5] *for if the Fathers can* *be*

Shrewd.

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[1] Obſervat. p. 5. [2] p. 18. [3] p. 18. [4] 23. [5] 24.

be proved to have been forgers of lies, the conſequences may go a great way [*f*].

When I ſaw therefore an unknown writer, entring forwardly into a debate, to which he appeared to be an utter ſtranger; and treating the chief point of it, as a problem, which might poſſibly be true, yet repreſenting it all the while, as ruinous to Chriſtianity, what elſe could I ſo naturally think of him, as that he was ſome Infidel in diſguiſe, who was catching all opportunities of prompting the enemies of revelation, to lay hold on every thing, which could furniſh matter of cavil or ridicule to the diſadvantage of the Chriſtian religion: for with whatever view he wrote, it is certain, that the obvious tendency of his performance is, to confirm people in Scepticiſm, and to ſuggeſt arguments for the defence of it.

I have ſince indeed been informed, that he is of a character very different, from what I at firſt imagined; celebrated for his *polemic* writings, and eminently diſtinguiſhed by his zeal and orthodox principles: and upon a ſtricter review of his work, I can diſcover many ſtrokes, which ſeem to indicate a genius of that ſort; an eagerneſs to appear the firſt in the diſpute, though he has nothing to offer in it, but the teſtimony of his zeal; the art of playing an hypotheſis againſt fact, and of eluding by a diſtinction, what he cannot oppoſe by reaſoning. Yet it puzzles me ſtill, to conſider, how ſuch a veteran in controverſy, and maſter of the *polemic* arts, can be ſo jejune and futile in the matter, and ſo injudicious and inconſiſtent in the management of his argument.

The profeſſed deſign of his *Obſervations*, as it is ſignified in the very Title page, is, *to remove the prejudices of the Author of the Introductory Diſcourſe*. But in a Diſcourſe of that nature,

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[f] p. 33.

formed in contradiction to opinions univerſally eſtabliſhed, and religiouſly believed, to warn people *againſt the Author's prejudices*, and to attempt ſeriouſly to remove them, is in itſelf abſurd and ridiculous. For in the preſent caſe, on which ſide can the weight of prejudices be ſuppoſed to lie? ſurely, the belief of nations, the teſtimony of ages; and the authority of fifteen Centuries, are the ſtrongeſt prejudices, which can poſſibly be conceived, in favor of any controverted facts; and no contradiction can be offered to them, but under all the diſadvantage and inequality, which any influence of that ſort can create. If our Obſervator therefore had really deſired, to have this quæſtion fairly examined, it ſhould have been his firſt care, to remove theſe capital prejudices out of the way, or at leaſt, to moderate the force of them, by informing his readers, that if the practice and example of paſt ages, of what duration ſoever, had been thought of weight enough to over-rule all other evidence; no improvement of ſcience, or reformation in religion, nor even Chriſtianity itſelf could ever have made it's way into the world: but inſtead of this, the whole purpoſe of his book is, not to remove, but to ſtrengthen old prejudices, and inculcate new ones in every page, againſt the deſign, the ſubject, and the whole compoſition of *the Introductory Diſcourſe*.

He declares it to be a work, *of no uſe or ſignificancy to us, either as Chriſtians or Proteſtants*; [1] that *it advances nothing towards the general concluſion, which it aims at, but leaves the quæſtion juſt as it found it*; [2] that *it quarrels with the whole ſtream of Chriſtian writers, and that a candid man would not have offered ſuch a charge to the public, without producing his evidence at the ſame time*; [3] that *the Fathers are in poſſeſſion, and have a right to keep it, till their title be diſproved* [4]. All which declarations

[1] p. 5, 25. [2] p. 24. [3] p. 6. [4] p. 25.

are ſo many contradictions to his pretence of removing prejudices. For it is not poſſible, that *a Diſcourſe of no ſignificancy, advancing nothing, but leaving things juſt as it found them,* ſhould be capable of infuſing any thing prejudicial to any cauſe whatſoever. Yet what is ſtill more remarkable, he affirms *the twelve laſt pages of it to be nothing elſe, but one thorough impertinency, from the beginning to the end* [1]. This indeed is the true old way of *removing prejudices,* by removing whole treatiſes at once; and ſhews, what our Obſervator would be at; the ſalutary method, now practiſed ſo ſucceſsfully abroad, of *an Index expurgatorius,* or what was uſed alſo formerly with equal ſucceſs, at home, an *Imprimatur* by the Chaplains of our Biſhops.

But what is it after all, which makes thoſe pages ſo completely impertinent and offenſive to him? Why, they contain *an harangue,* he ſays, *on the Scriptures being the rule of faith; and a charge upon the preſent Clergy, of carrying the credit of Eccleſiaſtic Antiquity to an heigth, which tends to throw us again into the hands of the Romiſh Church.* Yet if ſuch an harangue be true, it can never be impertinent, in a Proteſtant country; eſpecially at a time, when Popery is allowed to be gaining ground upon us. And as to *the charge,* as he calls it, upon *the preſent Clergy,* as if it included the whole body of them, it is the exaggeration onely of a polemic writer: for though Dr. *M*——, the Author of that Diſcourſe, charges the Clergy in general, with paying a greater deference to the Authority of the Fathers, than is due, and much more, than is paid to it by any other proteſtant Church; yet in the paſſage here referred to, where he is ſpeaking of principles, *now carried to a length, which muſt needs alarm all ſerious Proteſtants,* he cannot be underſtood to be charging any other part, or perſons of the Clergy, but thoſe

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[1] p. 29. See note.

particular Defenders of the primitive Monks and their miracles, whoſe names he often mentions, and whoſe principles he particularly expoſes, through that whole Diſcourſe, as dangerous to the Proteſtant cauſe: which charge he will always be ready to make good, againſt all, who aſſert, and all, who encourage and reward the Aſſertors of ſuch principles.

The argument of the Introductory Diſcourſe is formed upon a ſuppoſition of *the truth of the miracles of Chriſt and the Apoſtles*, as they ſtand recorded in the New Teſtament, and ſets forth the proper diſtinction between them, and the miracles of the ſucceding ages, in order to ſhew, that whatever be the ſucceſs of that work, the credit of the Goſpel cannot be affected by it. In this our Obſervator perfectly agrees with Dr. *M——n*, and expreſſly declares, in different parts of his book, *that, if not ſo much as one true miracle could be found after the days of the Apoſtles, the foundations of Chriſtianity would be equally ſecure* [1]. Yet notwithſtanding theſe declarations, we find him perpetually inſinuating, that the very attempt to prove, what when actually proved, he affirms, to be of no ſignificancy, is dangerous to the Authority of the Goſpel, and ſufficient to alarm all good Chriſtians with the apprehenſion of it's conſequences.

In the ſame manner, all the other Advocates of the primitive miracles, in the midſt of their zeal to aſſert their authority, take care to diſtinguiſh the Apoſtolic miracles, as eſtabliſhed on much clearer evidence and a firmer foundation. Thus *Dr. Berriman*, ſpeaking of a particular miracle of the fifth Century, affirms, *that it cannot be diſcredited, without rejecting all accounts of miracles, except thoſe of the Scriptures:* [2] intimating by that exception, that the Scriptural miracles would ſtand, though all the reſt were overthrown. Yet no ſooner does Dr. *M*——— attempt to overthrow them, than we hear theſe very men crying out with one voice, that *he is overthrowing Chriſtianity itſelf, and whatever his intention may be, that he will carry us of courſe, either into Popery or Scepticiſm.* [1] Hence we may obſerve, how eaſily ſpleen and prejudice can over-rule the reaſon and even conviction of theſe writers, and how the zeal, which they ſo warmly expreſs in the preſent caſe, cannot be a zeal for the Goſpel, which they declare to be unconcerned in it, but for ſome particular opinions and ſyſtems, which have been engrafted upon it at different times, for the more commodious ſupport of the intereſts, or eaſe of the leading Churchmen.

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[1] p. 30.

[2] See Serm. at Lady Moyers's lecture, p. 327.

Again, it is affirmed *in the Introductory Diſcourſe*, " that the " miracles of the fourth Century *were univerſally the effects of* " *fraud and impoſture*; which yet all the principal Fathers of " that age, partly through weak credulity, and partly through " reaſons of policy, made it their buſineſs, to propagate, in " favor of certain rites and doctrines, which they were deſirous " to eſtabliſh: that conſidering the characters of thoſe Fathers, " it was reaſonable to think, that they either forged thoſe " miracles themſelves, or knew them to be forged by others; " or, if that ſhould not be granted, it was certain at leaſt, that " they were ſo far deluded by other people's forgeries, as to " take them for real miracles: and let the Advocates of thoſe " Fathers chuſe which of theſe alternatives they pleaſed, it " would have the ſame force towards evincing Dr. *M*———'s general concluſion," *that we have no ſufficient ground to believe upon their authority, that any miraculous powers were ſubſiſting in the Church in that age.*

This ſtate of the caſe is clear and conſiſtent. Let us ſee then, how the Obſervator has contrived to perplex it. In the 1ſt place, he is angry with Dr. *M*—, for charging thoſe miracles to *fraud and impoſture*, when it was *as eaſy to aſcribe them to ſuperſtition and credulity*: *is every man a knave or cheat*, ſays he, *who believes, that there is virtue in an amulet or charm?* [2] By this eaſy way of putting the quæſtion, one would imagine the diſpute to have turned onely, on the primitive method of *curing the cramp, or the tooth-ach*. But when poſitive teſtimonies have been produced from the moſt venerable of the Fathers, declaring, that *the dead had been raiſed to life, and the blind reſtored to ſight, by touching the reliques* of ſome reputed Saint, or by ſending *their clothes onely to be touched* by them; will *the virtue of an amulet* be ſufficient to account for the reality of ſuch facts, or the belief of that virtue, to juſtify the integrity of ſuch witneſſes? but on this article he aſks, *how Dr. M*— *comes to know, that the Fathers did not believe the miracles, which they themſelves have recorded?* [2] The anſwer is obvious, that the nature of the things atteſted, and the characters of the perſons atteſting muſt convince every reaſonable man, that they could not believe them. And here it is curious to obſerve, how the ſtate of the controverſy is of a ſudden reverſed: for the Obſervator, whoſe chief quarrel with Dr. *M*— is, for his injurious opinion and treatment of the antient Fathers, now takes the oppoſite ſide, and quarrels with him, for thinking more highly of them, than he himſelf does. Dr. *M*—— conceives ſo good an opinion of their underſtanding, as to think it impoſſible, that they ſhould not diſcover the palpable forgery of the abſurd ſtories, which they relate; whereas the Obſervator takes them, to have been ſo groſſly ignorant and credulous, that they might probably believe them.

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[1] See Def. of Dr. C—n's Charge, p. 46.

A Cat ſhould be called a Cat,

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[1] Obſervat. p. 13. [2] p. 14.

Since he is ſo fond then of this hypotheſis of their *credulity*, and thinks it, the onely way of ſaving the more valuable character of their integrity, it will be proper to conſider the nature and extent of it a little more preciſely, by applying it to a particular fact or two, on which it is ſuppoſed to have been exerciſed: which I ſhall extract again from St. *Jerom*, as being of all the Antients, the moſt generally eſteemed for his learning and judgement by the Divines of theſe days.

Jerom's Hilarion.

This Father, in his life of *St. Hilarion the Monk*, among many other monſtrous ſtories, relates; " how that holy man " happening to travel into *Dalmatia*, was there preſently in" formed, that a terrible Dragon was laying waſte the whole " province, of ſo enormous a ſize and ſtrength, that he could " ſuck up into his mouth, by the force of his breath, whole " oxen and ſheep, together with the herdſmen and ſhepherds, " and ſwallow them down at once. *Hilarion* therefore, being " implored by the inhabitants of the country, to deliver them " from this monſter, ordered a pile of wood to be prepared, " and having put up his prayers to Chriſt, called out the Dra" gon and commanded it to aſcend the pile, which being done " accordingly, he ſet fire to the wood, and ſo the beaſt was " burnt alive, in the ſight of all the people [1].

Dragon burnt alive, in the sight of all the People.

St. Anthony's Centaur.

The ſame Father, in his Life alſo of an Hermit, named *Paul*, tells this ſtory, " that when *St. Antony*, another Hermit, was " travelling through the deſerts of *Egypt*, to ſeek out *Paul*, " whom he was ordered to viſit by a divine revelation, he met " with a *Centaur* upon the road, and being amazed at the fi" gure of ſo ſtrange a creature, and having armed himſelf with " the ſign of the Croſs, he demanded of the beaſt, in what part " of the deſert, the Servant of God reſided: to which the *Cen-*

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[1] Hierou. Op. Tom. 4. par. 2. p. 87.

“ *taur* made ſome anſwer in a ſtrange and horrible tone of voice, “ and with geſtures of great civility, pointed out the way to “ him at the ſame time, by ſtretching out his right hand, and “ then ran ſwiftly away.” Upon which, *Jerom* leaves it as a problem, to the conſideration of the reader, *Whether the Devil aſſumed that ſhape, to affright the holy man, or the Deſerts, fruitfull of monſters, produced that ſpecies alſo of animals.* But be that as it will, “ *Antony* had not gone many ſteps farther, won- “ dering within himſelf, at what he had juſt ſeen, before he “ eſpied *a Satyr* approaching towards him, or a little man, “ with Goat’s feet, a crooked noſe, and a forehead armed with “ horns, who, in token of peace, offered him the fruit of “ the palm tree, and being aſked preſently by *Antony*, what “ he was, gave this anſwer; I am a mortal, and one of thoſe “ inhabitants of the Deſert, whom the deluded Gentiles wor- “ ſhip, under the names of *Fauns, Satyrs* and *Incubi*, and am “ now deputed, as an Embaſſador from our whole tribe, “ to beg your prayers and interceſſion for us. To our “ common Lord and maſter, whom we know, to have been “ ſent for the ſalvation of the whole world” — to which ſtory *Jerom* adds this remark; “ that no man need to be ſcrupu- “ lous about the truth of it, becauſe it was confirmed to the whole “ world, in the time of *Conſtantin*, when a little man, of the “ ſame ſpecies, was brought alive to *Alexandria*, and afforded “ a remarkable ſpectacle to the whole people [1].”

His ſatyr

Fauns Incubi

Now it is allowed by all, that *St. Jerom* was a man of great parts and knowledge: *Dr. Chapman* declares, *that he underſtood the nature of piety and ſuperſtition, as well as any man living: and were he now alive, would ſoon do juſtice to himſelf and his brethren by his pen, and laſh his revilers into a little more gravity and civility* [2].

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[1] Ibid. p. 70. 71. [2] See Miſcell. Tracts, p. 182. and Def. of his Charge, p. 38.

If then, notwithſtanding the authority of ſo great a man, Dr. *M*— finds himſelf convinced from the very nature of theſe ſtories, that they are all utterly fabulous, he muſt be thought to judge reaſonably, in believing, that *St. Jerom*, (the ſuperiority of whoſe judgement and learning he freely acknowledges) could not fail of being convinced of it too. But if our Obſervator has any ſcruples ſtill on this head, and will inſiſt, that *Jerom* might actually believe them; I am content to debate the matter with him on his own terms, and refer the whole quæſtion to this ſingle iſſue; *whether men ſo groſsly credulous and ſuperſtitious can be authentic witneſſes of miracles, which tend to confirm their particular intereſts, or prejudices, or favorite opinions?*

In the mean while, I find it neceſſary, to take notice of a diſtinction or two, of which he makes great uſe, and in which his chief ſtrength lies; for unleſs we can clear ourſelves of theſe, we may ſpare the pains of diſputing with him, ſince by their help, he can evade the concluſion, though he allows all the premiſes. For example, it is affirmed in *the Introductory Diſcourſe, that the Fathers themſelves, when they are diſpoſed to ſpeak truth, have not ſcrupled to confeſs, that miracles were actually ceaſed in the fourth Century, becauſe the Church ſtood no longer in need of them* [1]. The Obſervator himſelf allows, *that there are many ſuch paſſages in thoſe Fathers* [2]. Yet the ſame Fathers, on other occaſions, confidently affirm, and ſometimes, from their own knowledge, that perpetual miracles were ſtill wrought in the ſame age, by *reliques, ſacred oil, holy water, the ſign of the Croſs, and the ſacramental bread.* Now from paſſages, ſo ſeemingly oppoſite and contradictory, a plain man would naturally conclude, that thoſe Fathers were inconſiſtent with themſelves, and telling us conſequently what was falſe, either on the one ſide, or the other.

[1] See Diſc. p. 36.

[2] Obſerv. p. 9. See note.

But ſuch an imagination muſt not be entertained, it ſeems, of perſons ſo holy and venerable; who were *too good*, as Dr. *Chapman* declares, *to offer at any quirks or illuſions* [1]*;* of which, this obſervator will preſently convince us, and ſolve the difficulty. For having diſcovered, that the miracles, which are recorded by *St. Auſtin*, are all ſaid to have been wrought, not *by the miniſtry of living men, extraordinarily appointed, as in the Apoſtles days, but either by the Sacraments, or by prayer, or the memories of the Martyrs,* he makes this reflection upon it, that "if the Author of the *Introductory Diſcourſe* would have underſtood thoſe paſſages of "the Fathers, as they ought to be underſtood, with this diſtinc"tion, he would have ſpared his unmannerly reflection. Be"cauſe it might be true, *that miracles were then wrought by the* "*Sacraments, though it was not true, that any were then wrought* "*by the miniſtry of living men, as in the days of the Apoſtles* [2].

Austen

Miracles wrought by the Sacraments, tho not by Men.

These polemic writers, if they can ſerve a preſent turn, and get rid of ſome incidental difficulty in a debate, by any quibble of this ſort, ſeldom look forward, or conſider, what effect it may have on the main quæſtion, or on Chriſtianity itſelf. The preſent diſtinction ſerves to clear the Fathers from the charge of inconſiſtency; and ſo far it will be applauded by all the admirers of primitive antiquity; but it has not yet done half it's work; for unleſs the reaſon, aſſigned by thoſe Fathers, for *the ceſſation of miracles*, can be diſtinguiſhed alſo away, they muſt be underſtood to be ſpeaking of an *univerſal ceſſation*, becauſe, *the Church*, as they tell us, *ſtood no longer in need of them*. But here indeed, our Obſervator's diſtinction will do moſt notable ſervice: for though the religion of the Goſpel, after it had gained an eſtabliſhment in the world, ſtood no longer in need of miracles, wrought *by the miniſtry of living men*, as in the days of the Apoſtles, which were neceſſary onely, to the firſt plantation of it, yet the new rites and doctrines engrafted upon that *Goſpel-religion*, with regard to *the Sacraments, the reliques* of Saints, and *Monks*, &c. required new miracles of a different kind, to facilitate the eſtabliſhment alſo of theſe: and ſince living men were no longer indued with thoſe extraordinary gifts, the inanimate part of the creation was now called up in judgement againſt the contemners of theſe rites; and the *rotten bones and duſt of the Martyrs*; or *a rag of their old cloaths*; *a drop of water, or oil*; *a bit of bread*; *the chip of an old Croſs, or the figure of a new one*; in ſhort, every thing, which had been touched by a Saint, or conſecrated by a Prieſt, began to work miracles, and continues to do ſo, in the ſame manner, from that time to this, through four parts in five, of the whole Chriſtian world.

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[1] Miſcel. Tracts, p. 26.

[2] Obſerv. p. 9. note.

Thus we ſee, what clear work our Obſervator's diſtinction would make in the preſent quæſtion. But there is one unhappy circumſtance belonging to it, which he is not perhaps aware of, or willing at leaſt to conceal, that it is contrary to fact, and the teſtimony of thoſe very Fathers, in whoſe defence he now urges it. For though they ſpeak much more frequently of miracles wrought by *reliques, and the Sacraments*, &c. than of any other kind, yet they ſpeak likewiſe of ſeveral, which they atteſt to be wrought by *holy Monks, then living*; by the credit of which, they chiefly eſtabliſhed the Monkiſh order, though vile and contemptible in the judgement of the wiſer and better ſort, of the Chriſtian laity in thoſe very days.

Again, Dr. *M*——— lays it down for a maxim, in *the Introductory Diſcourſe*, that *whenever any ſacred rite becomes the inſtrument of real miracles, we ought to conſider that rite, as confirmed by divine approbation:* whence he infers, *that if we admit the miracles of the fourth Century, we muſt admit the rites, which*

which thoſe miracles confirmed, and thoſe Fathers practiſed. But here again, the Obſervator ſtops us ſhort with a diſtinction, without which, he ſays, *that reaſoning cannot be true* [1]. The diſtinction is this; " that miracles wrought by *the reliques* of the " Martyrs, or by the *Sacraments,* or by *holy Monks,* cannot rea- " ſonably be interpreted to authoriſe any ſuperſtitious practice " or doctrine, which prevailed in thoſe times, with regard to " *reliques,* or *the Sacrament,* or *Monkery,* unleſs there be ſome " circumſtance in them, which ſpecifies ſuch an interpretation; " for otherwiſe they muſt be underſtood onely, to confirm that " religion of the Goſpel, for which thoſe Martyrs died, and " which thoſe Monks profeſſed." In the ſupport of which diſtinction, he ſpends two or three pages, with ſome little ſubtilty and refinement, but not a grain of ſenſe in them; and ſerving onely to illuſtrate his own ignorance of the times, and the ſubject too, of which he is talking.

For inſtance; it was the principal devotion of the fourth Century, in all caſes of ſickneſs or diſtreſs, *to fly to the tombs of the Martyrs*; grounded on a general perſuaſion, that by proſtrating themſelves *before their reliques, and eſpecially by touching them,* they ſhould find preſent cure and relief: and great numbers are affirmed by the Fathers, to have been cured in this manner of all ſorts of diſeaſes, and ſeveral, *to have been raiſed even from the dead.* Now let him diſtinguiſh here, as much as he pleaſes, it is certain from the experience of all ages, that the atteſtation and belief of ſuch miraculous cures never had any other effect, or were underſtood to have any other meaning, than to imprint an opinion of *a divine virtue in the reliques,* and conſequently, to authoriſe *the worſhip,* which was paid to them: which began to be paid, from the very moment, in which they firſt began to work miracles, and was ſoon carried to that extravagance, with which we ſee it practiſed at this day, in the Church of *Rome*.

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[1] Obſerv. p. 8, 10.

The Obſervator however inſiſts, *that if God thinks fit, to work a cure by dead men's bones, it will not follow, that dead men or their bones ought to be worſhipped* [1]. But the fact is, that the worſhip of them did immediately follow, and has ever ſince followed, and muſt for ever follow the belief of ſuch cures, to the utter confutation of his ſilly hypotheſis. For in order to defend the authority of the Fathers, he firſt ſuppoſes it true, that miracles were really wrought by *dead men's bones*; and then, in contradiction to their authority, is forced to deny the uſe and end, for which the ſame Fathers declare them to have been wrought, and which, by the credit of thoſe pretended miracles, gained an eſtabliſhment through the whole Chriſtian world: whereas the end, for which they were wrought, and the effect, which they have conſtantly produced, ought to have convinced him, and every other Proteſtant, that they were all mere fictions.

For it is certain, though he does not ſeem to know it, that all the miracles of this kind, were ſuſpected and contemned, from the very beginning, by the more diſcreet and honeſt part of the Clergy, who argued, "that ſigns and wonders were proper indeed, for the converſion of Heathens and unbelievers, whoſe prejudices were too ſtrong, to be over-ruled by the cool arguments of reaſon; but that miracles wrought by *reliques*, within the Church and among the faithfull, were of no uſe to the advancement of the Goſpel, but tended to corrupt and debaſe it, by the introduction of paganiſh ſuperſtitions into the Chriſtian worſhip." [2]. Which controverſy began with the firſt relique-worſhip of thoſe primitive ages, in the ſame manner, as it is carried on at this day between the Proteſtants and Papiſts, yet the Obſervator ſuppoſes, that God might be working miracles all the while, by *dead men's bones*, without intending, that they ſhould give any ſanction to a ſuperſtitious worſhip, intirely grounded upon the belief, that his approbation was ſignified by thoſe very miracles.

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[1] Obſerv. p. 10.

[2] Vid. Hieron. Op. T. 4. par. 2. p. 285.

But he obſerves, " that the Author of *the Introductory Diſ-" courſe*, would have had a better pretence for aſſerting, that " we muſt either accept the doctrines, or reject the miracles of " thoſe ages, if he could produce any Monk or other perſon, " who appealed expreſsly to miracles, in confirmation of an " uſage, not warranted by Scripture, and to be received as of di-" vine appointment." [1] If he had been acquainted with Eccleſiaſtic Antiquity, he could not be at a loſs for examples of that ſort; the very *Diſcourſe*, which he pretends to confute, affords a remarkable one, in the controverſy between *Vigilantius*, who proteſted againſt *the religious honors paid to the bones and duſt of the Martyrs*, and *St. Jerom*, who defended them: *anſwer me*, ſays *Jerom*, *how it comes to paſs, that in this vile duſt and aſhes, there is ſo great a manifeſtation of ſigns and wonders.* [2] For what is this, but a direct appeal to a divine interpoſition, in favor of *that relique-worſhip*, which the *primitive Proteſtant* was condemning, and the *primitive Father* defending?

Vigilantius

Jerom

Having now entertained us with all the little cavils, which occurred to him on this article, he procedes to confirm them, by the authority of *Dr. Claget*, whoſe *determination*, as he calls it, *on this very argument*, he has tranſcribed at length in two paragraphs. And leſt we ſhould wonder, why the opinion of that ingenious writer ſhould be introduced under the pompous title, *of a determination*, he refers us, for the reaſon of it, to the bottom of the page [1]; where we are told, *that he was once the Preacher of Gray's Inn,* as if nothing but what is deciſive could be delivered from that pulpit.

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[1] Obſ. p. 9.

[2] Hieron. ibid.

Let us ſee then, what it is, that *Dr. Claget has determined* on this quæſtion. He declares in the firſt place, *that the miracles of the 4th century are urged by the Romaniſts, as an invincible argument, of God's approving the honor given to the Saints and reliques of that age.* But when he attempts to confute that invincible argument, upon the common hypotheſis, of the truth of thoſe miracles, he does nothing more, than what our Obſervator has been doing, and all others muſt do in the ſame caſe, trifle, and ſhuffle, and labor for pitifull diſtinctions, which betray a conſciouſneſs of acting againſt his judgement, and oblige him after all, to ſignify, that he did not believe thoſe miracles to be true. But what is more remarkable; in the ſingle paſſage of the two paragraphs, here tranſcribed, in which *Dr. Claget* can be ſaid *to determine* any thing at all, he *determines* in favor of *Dr. M—n*'s argument, and declares the ſame opinion, with reſpect to the primitive miracles, which is declared in *the Introductory Diſcourſe,* as it is expreſſed by him in the following words; *And if I ſhould ſay, that they, who can be content with the old religion,* [*of the ſcriptures,*] *may and ought to be content with the old miracles,* [*of the ſcriptures,*] *I ſhould ſay no other thing, but what I could juſtify* [2].

But *Dr. Claget,* as the Obſervator tells us, *imputes the falſe miracles of the 4th century to credulity* [3]; whereas Dr. *M---n* charges them *to fraud and impoſture, yet ſometimes, when he is in better mood, aſcribes them alſo himſelf to credulity.* Whence he takes occaſion to cenſure him, *for talking inconſiſtently, and at random, and varying his charge, as his humour varies* [4]. Which ſilly blunder runs thro' his whole performance, and ſhews how little he has thought upon his ſubject, ſince this obvious reflection has never once occurred to him, " that where-ever falſe mi-" racles have obtained a general credit, there *fraud and credu-" lity* muſt both have been jointly employed in producing that " effect; *fraud* in the contrivance, and *credulity* in the reception " of them; and if either of theſe can be juſtly charged upon " the Fathers, that it will have the ſame force, with reſpect to " the argument of the *Introductory Diſcourſe*."

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[1] Obſerv. p. 11th. [2] P. 12. [3] 13. [4] 15. 33.

There is one method of reaſoning, peculiar to this Obſervator, and which I have rarely met with any where elſe; that in the want of arguments, he can form them at pleaſure, even from his own ignorance; the inſtances of which, he frequently urges, as ſo many objections to the *Introductory Diſcourſe. I cannot ſee this*; *do not underſtand that*; *am not ſatisfied that his occount is fair*; *know no ſuch thing*; *think the Gentleman miſtaken*; are common objections with him. [1] And tho' in other writers, a confeſſion of ignorance generally carries ſome appearance of modeſty, yet in this, it ſeems to flow from that ſort of pride, which cannot allow any man, to know more of any ſubject than himſelf, or any thing to be true, of which he can be ignorant.

He ſays, " that he knows no book, not Canonical, which " paſſed upon all the Fathers, as genuin and divine, thro' ſe-" veral ſucceſſive ages: nor does it follow, that becauſe ſome " Fathers cited ſpurious pieces, therefore they were held in " the ſame rank with the Scriptures." [2] To which it will be a ſufficient anſwer for the preſent, that, in the age immediately ſucceding to that of the Apoſtles, certain writings were forged by ſome of *the ableſt and moſt learned of the Chriſtians*, under the title

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[1] P. 5, 7, 18, 20, 26.

[2] 21.

Sibylline oracles forged by some of the ablest and most learned of the Xtians.

Justin

Clemens

Peter Paul

Spurious Books.

of *Sibylline books or oracles*, which were falſely aſcribed to the antient *Sibyl*, and pretended to foretell and deſcribe prophetically, all the principal acts and circumſtances of our Saviour's life. Which books were cited by all the Fathers, and in all ages, from *Juſtin Martyr*'s time down to the Reformation, as genuin, and inſpired by God, in the ſame manner, as *the prophetic books of the Old Teſtament*; and particularly, in the 2d century, that *Clemens of Alexandria*, one of the moſt learned and critical of all the Fathers, appeals to their authority as divine, and confirms it by the expreſs teſtimonies of St. *Peter and* St. *Paul*, which he draws likewiſe, from certain ſpurious books, which were current in that age, and believed to be the genuin writings of thoſe Apoſtles.

But here again, he throws in one of his puzzling quæſtions, and aſks; "what does the author *of the Diſcourſe* know of the abilities, learning, or religion of thoſe primitive forgers of books, whom he calls the ableſt and moſt learned of the Chriſtians?" [1] To which I may readily anſwer, that he knows nothing more, than what every man of ſenſe may know, as well as he, from the very nature of the thing; that books, written upon the plan, and for the defence of the Goſpel, full of piety and Chriſtian principles, at a time, when that religion was perſecuted by all the powers on earth, muſt needs have been written by Chriſtians; and being ſo artfully written, and ſo highly eſteemed, as to paſs upon the moſt judicious, for divine or apoſtolic compoſitions, they muſt have been written alſo, by the *ableſt and moſt learned* of the Chriſtians, at a time, when the whole body of them was generally reproach'd for their ruſticity and want of learning.

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[1] P. 22.

He condeſcends indeed to grant, tho' with ſome caution, and for *argument's ſake*, as he ſays, *that the Fathers made uſe, both of ſpurious books, and forged miracles:* from which he draws this inference; " that as together with thoſe ſpurious books, " they uſed ſome, which were genuin, ſo it is natural to ſup- " poſe, that among their falſe miracles there might be ſome al- " ſo, which were real: and then aſks, how this can help to " ſupport the general concluſion, that *no miracles were wrought* " *in thoſe ages.*" [1] But from a joint uſe of *ſpurious and genuin books*, to infer a joint uſe alſo of *ſpurious and genuin miracles*, is weak and fallacious; becauſe there is no analogy between the two caſes: for the uſe of books, whether ſpurious or genuin, depends intirely on man; whereas in the uſe of miracles, as far as any of them are true, God himſelf muſt alſo be concerned. When the leaders therefore of a Church, either thro' craft or credulity, are impoſing falſe miracles upon the people; to ſuppoſe, that God would become a party, and throw in a true miracle now and then, to give them credit, is not onely an abſurd, but impious ſuppoſition. But ſhould I allow, that the detection of ſpurious books and falſe miracles, does not neceſſarily prove, that there were no true miracles in the ſame age, and will not conſequently ſupport Dr. *M*---'s general concluſion; yet the Obſervator's quæſtion is certainly impertinent, becauſe he might have ſeen, from the *Introductory Diſcourſe*, that the proof of thoſe forgeries was not intended, *to ſupport that concluſion*, but onely to ſtrengthen the probability of it, in concert with 20 others, which more directly confirm it. The whole purpoſe, for which it is urged, is granted by himſelf, and muſt be allowed by every body elſe, that thoſe, who *forged books*, would, for the ſame cauſe, *forge miracles* too, if there was an occaſion for them; and that the frequent uſe of ſuch forgeries, which is allowed to have been made by the principal Fathers, muſt increaſe the ſuſpicion, that all the miracles, which they atteſt, were of the ſame kind.

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[1] *P.* 22.

Among many other cenſures upon the Author of *the Introductory Diſcourſe*, he charges him, "with acting diſingenuouſly, "in publiſhing it, without ſending his larger work abroad at "the ſame time, and ſcattering his ſurmiſes, before the evi-"dence is heard. Which has the appearance, he ſays, of an "experiment rather, to try the ſenſe of the public, than of "confidence in the juſtice of his cauſe [1]." And here indeed, I readily agree with him, that, by the ſeparate publication of *that Diſcourſe*, the Author of it ſeems to intimate ſome diſtruſt of himſelf, and a temper totally different from that confidence, with which the Obſervator ruſhes into a controverſy, without any previous acquaintance with it: who yet in this very cauſe, and before the evidence, as he complains, is heard, makes no ſcruple to pronounce ſentence, and like a worthy Eccleſiaſtic Judge, to diſmiſs it at once, as frivolous and vexatious.

But whatever judgement he may think fit to declare on the ſubject of the *Introductory Diſcourſe*; Dr. *M—n* knows it to be important, and treats it as ſuch; yet is ſenſible, that he ſtands ſingle in the defence of it, and aware of the cenſures, which it may draw upon him from the bigotted, the intereſted and the ambitious part of the Clergy; from ſome, who poſſeſs the chief preferments of the Church, and from all the numerous tribe, who court them. He remembers, what clamors and injurious ſuſpicions, the freedom of his writings has formerly drawn upon him from that ſame ſort of men; who treat him as an enemy, not onely to the preſent eſtabliſhment of our Church, but to religion itſelf: yet conſcious of his integrity, and that his principles tend to fix them both on a more ſecure foundation, he writes with no other view, than to unite all reaſonable Proteſtants the more firmly in their defence; and to guard our people, as well from *Popiſh ſuperſtition*, as *fanatical enthuſiaſm*; both of them equally dangerous to the peace of theſe Kingdoms, and both making advances upon us at this very time from different quarters indeed, and parties of men, but from the ſame ſource and pattern of primitive antiquity.

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[1] Obſervat. p. 24.

In theſe circumſtances, perſuaded, that he was doing ſervice, yet decried, as if he were doing miſchief to Chriſtianity, how could he act with more candor or deference to the public authority, than by ſending his ſcheme abroad in this plain and naked form; that if any one of ſuperior judgement and knowledge of Antiquity, ſhould happen to convince him, either of the falſehood or iniquity of it, he might withdraw it in time, before he had engaged himſelf too forwardly in it, or warmed himſelf and his readers too much, to judge impartially of the particular proofs, which may be alledged in confirmation of it. But if it be found after all, to contain nothing either falſe or iniquitous, nor to threaten any hurt to any thing, but to groundleſs ſyſtems, and ſuperſtitious opinions, which have no other claim to be retained, but that they have long been eſtabliſhed, and are of no other uſe, but to lull us on in a ſlothfull ignorance and implicit credulity, or to gratify the indolence of ſome leading Churchmen, who think, that nothing can want a change, which contributes to their repoſe. If this, I ſay, ſhould be the caſe, and no material objection be offered, but that perpetual obſtacle of all reformation, *an affected dread of improbable conſequences, and the danger of diſturbing ſettlements*, he will not be driven by any diſcouragement, which he may meet with, from purſuing his deſtined taſk of publiſhing his free thoughts on all quæſtions, and eſpecially on thoſe which relate to religion, as far as he believes them to be true, and of benefit alſo to the public.

But to return to our Obſervator, who begs our patience for one word more, concerning the connection between the argument of *the Introductory Diſcourſe*, and our controverſy with the *Church of Rome:* with reſpect to which, it is affirmed in that Diſcourſe, *that by admitting the miracles of the primitive ages, we ſhall be entangled in a ſeries of difficulties, whence we can never fairly extricate ourſelves, without allowing the ſame miraculous powers even to the preſent age.* Here again he aſks, *what are theſe difficulties which the Gentleman is ſo afraid of?* declares, that *he ſees none*; *and that we may ſurely be juſtified in admitting the miracles of the 2d and 3d centuries, without being obliged to receive the Popiſh legends* [1]. But by what principle or diſtinction may we be ſo ſure of it? For even his *polemic genius* has not been able to ſuggeſt any: and it is certain, that every other Proteſtant, who has taken the moſt pains, towards ſearching this matter to the bottom, has found thoſe pains perpetually fruſtrated by inſuperable difficulties. In condeſcenſion therefore to his confeſſed ignorance, I ſhall endeavour to lay the quæſtion before him in ſuch a light, as may inable him to ſee ſome of it's difficulties, if his blindneſs be not incurable.

It is allowed by all Chriſtians, that the miraculous gifts, which are mentioned in the Goſpel, continued in the Church, thro' the Apoſtolic age: and it is affirmed by the Fathers and Church-Hiſtorians, that they ſubſiſted ſtill in the ſame manner, after the days of the Apoſtles, and were openly exerted in every ſucceding age, down even to the preſent: which is now the prevailing opinion, in much the greateſt part of the Chriſtian world; and the chief argument, by which *the ſuperſtitious rites and doctrines of the Romiſh Church* are at this day ſupported.

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[1] Obſ. p. 26.

The Proteſtants on the other hand, in contradiction to the Romaniſts, univerſally affirm, that *the miraculous gifts of the Apoſtolic days have long ſince utterly ceaſed* in the Chriſtian Church, but cannot agree among themſelves, about the time, when the ceſſation of them commenced, nor have been able to aſſign any probable criterion, by which we may declare them, to have proceded thus far, and no farther: yet the Obſervator ſees no difficulty in the caſe, and cannot conceive wherein it lies.

Many of the Proteſtants indeed, as it is ſaid in *the Introductory Diſcourſe*, take the converſion of the Roman Empire to have been the æra, in which true miracles ceaſed. But this is a mere arbitrary hypotheſis, grounded neither on Hiſtory, nor any ſolid reaſon; becauſe miracles are ſaid to have been wrought ſtill, after that period, as freely as before it, and in ſome caſes atteſted by the ſame witneſſes; who, by this hypotheſis, muſt be held worthy of all credit before that revolution, yet unworthy of any, immediately after it. But what is ſtill of more difficult digeſtion; this ſame hypotheſis, if admitted to be true, gives the lie at once to all the illuſtrious Fathers of the 4th Century, *St. Epiphanius, St. Baſil, St. Athanaſius, St. Jerom, St. Ambroſe, St. Chryſoſtom, St. Auſtin*, &c. perſons the moſt highly reverenced and Sainted by the Catholic Church, for their piety, probity, zeal, and ſervices to the Chriſtian religion: who have all ſeverally recorded and affirmed great numbers of miracles, to have been wrought in their times, many years after the converſion of the Roman Empire.

Epiphanius, Basil, Athanasius, Jerom, Ambrose Chrisostom Austin, all affirmed Miracles in their times.

If we trace the ſucceſſion of miracles ſtill lower, we ſhall find *Dr. Chapman* defending ſome even of the 5th century; the moſt extravagant perhaps, that any hiſtory has recorded; yet declaring, *that we cannot reject them, without ſhaking the credit of all human teſtimony, and believing nothing but what we ſee and feel and know ourſelves* [1]. And his fellow-laborer, Dr. *Berriman*, makes the ſame declaration, in favor of another miracle, in the end of the ſame century, *which cannot be diſcredited*, he ſays, *without ſhaking the faith of hiſtory*, and *rejecting all accounts of miracles, beſides thoſe of the Scriptures* [2].

Thus according to the judgement of theſe two Proteſtant Divines, diſtinguiſhed by their eminent zeal for primitive antiquity, miracles were ſtill ſubſiſting in the Church, even after it was plunged into the depths of Popery; yet our Obſervator ſees no difficulty. He will ſay perhaps, that wherever we find any ſuperſtitious rites eſtabliſhed, or incredible facts affirmed, by a pretence of miracles, there we ought to diſtinguiſh and reject ſuch miracles. But this is to beg the quæſtion, not to prove it; and is too precarions a way of reaſoning to give any ſatisfaction; becauſe what ſeems incredible to one, may ſeem credible to another: and Dr. *Berriman*, ſpeaking of *the miracles of the 6th century*, has over-ruled every plea of that kind, by declaring; *that we have no reaſon, to diſpute the truth of the facts, on account of the miraculouſneſs, or natural incredibility of them, unleſs it can be proved, as it certainly cannot be, that miracles were ceaſed in that age* [3].

Thus which way ſoever we turn ourſelves, we ſhall be entangled onely the more, by our ſtruggling. If we urge the incredibility of the facts related in theſe later ages; theſe Advocates tell us preſently, that the ſame objection bears as ſtrongly againſt the earlier ages, but that the authority of the witneſſes will over-rule it in both; if we diſpute the veracity of the later witneſſes, they affirm them to be full as credible, as the more antient, and their evidence as convincing, as human teſtimony can poſſibly be. So that no other part is left, but either, to reject all miracles, except thoſe of the Scriptures, agreeably to the genuin intereſts and principles of Proteſtants: or elſe, to admit them all, agreeably to the practice and policy of the Romaniſts. For what Dr. *Berriman* has declared, concerning *the miracles of the 6th century*, may as juſtly be applied to the *miracles of the* 16*th*; that there is no reaſon to diſpute the truth of them, unleſs it can be proved, *that miracles were then ceaſed:* for on this proof alone, the ſtrength and ſecurity of the Proteſtant cauſe chiefly depend.

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[1] Miſcel. Tracts, p. 167. [2] Serm. at Lady Moyer's Lect. p. 327. [3] Ibid. 356.

The Obſervator however procedes to acquaint us, that our Reformers *thought it to their purpoſe, to challenge as much of antiquity to themſelves, as they could find authorities to juſtify, in the antient Fathers* [1]. And I may add; that they ſometimes challenged more of it, than truly belonged to them, or was ſerviceable to their cauſe. But theſe Reformers, who dealt ſo much with antiquity, were generally of that ſort, who acted under the direction of the Court, and were forced on that account, to act by political as well as Chriſtian principles: whereas the greater part of the reforming Divines, as well in our own, as in foreign countries, who were not cramped by any influence of that kind, but wrote purely, for the defence of Proteſtantiſm againſt Popery, frankly rejected and threw out of their Scheme, all the traditions and doctrines, and whole authority of the primitive Fathers, as making no part of their religion, nor ſerving to any good purpoſe in it; of which we have clear proofs in many of their writings ſtill extant.

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[1] Obſ. p. 28. But the Obſervator takes occaſion in this place, to cenſure the Author of the Diſcourſe, *for citing paſſages from Dr.* Waterland *unfairly, which, if rightly quoted, would bear directly againſt him*, [p. 28. Note †.] Yet all, which that Author has ſo cited, is given in Dr. *Waterland*'s own words, without any mixture or paraphraſe, and what is more to the purpoſe, the paſſage here particularly referred to, is an intire paragraph, in which Dr. *Waterland* profeſſes, to have collected *the ſumm, of what he had been endeavouring to prove*, in the whole foregoing treatiſe: and it is not poſſible, that any man's ſentiments can be more fairly repreſented, than in thoſe very words, to which he himſelf refers us, for the ſubſtance of them: and if that Dr. has happened to talk differently in different parts of his writings, it certainly proves nothing elſe but his own inconſiſtency. For I may venture to affirm of the Author of the *Introductory Diſcourſe*, what I ſhall ſay without ſcruple of myſelf, that I have never read all Dr. *Waterland*'s works, nor any of them perhaps, quite through, but have ever valued my time too much, to ſpend it on ſuch reading; and am content to rank myſelf among thoſe *ſuperficial* Dunces, whom Dr. *Chapman* ſo highly contemns, for ſatisfying themſelves, in the choice of their books, *with a few of the moſt eminent and elegant in each claſs*. See his Charge, p. 27.

Never read Waterlands Works through.

The Obſervator having now ſerved his chief purpoſe, of diſplaying his *polemic* talents, and ſhewn, to what length he could hold up the debate, is content at laſt, to give up the main point, which he had ſeemingly been contending for, and to grant the whole, of what the Author of *the Introductory Diſcourſe* can be concerned about. For he declares, " that when " the Apoſtles died the whole ſyſtem of faith was ſealed up " and complete: and as no other faith was afterwards to be " admitted, ſo, if no miracles had afterwards been wrought, " the foundation would have been equally ſecure, ſince the " old miracles are ſufficient for the old doctrines [1]." And in another place he adds theſe words; " ſay the worſt you can " ſay, (and more, I am perſuaded, than will ever be proved to " be true) that there is not ſo much as one miracle upon record, " ſince the days of the Apoſtles, that is ſufficiently atteſted: " what has Chriſtianity to do with this? Nothing. For Chriſti-" anity ſtands not upon the new miracles, but upon the old[2]." But tho' this be true; I muſt put him however in mind of what he ought to have intimated at the ſame time, that it is true onely, with regard to that Chriſtianity, which is profeſſed by Proteſtants; whereas *Popiſh Chriſtianity*, which poſſeſſes much the largeſt ſhare of the Chriſtian world, would be undone at once, if the authority of the primitive Fathers and primitive miracles ſhould be rejected in common by all Chriſtians.

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[1] Obſ. p. 30. [2] P. 32.

The ſumm then of all, which our Obſervator has affirmed on this quæſtion, with any ſenſe or truth, as well as of Dr. *Claget's determination,* on which he lays no ſmall ſtreſs, amounts to no more than this, *that the Proteſtant religion ſtands firm upon the foundation of the old miracles of the Goſpel*; *and that Proteſtants conſequently, if they are conſiſtent with themſelves, ought to be content with thoſe old miracles, and neglect all the reſt.* And this, I ſay, is as much as Dr. *M*— can expect from the generality of thoſe, who may happen to read his *Introductory Diſcourſe.* For he is not ſo weak as to imagine, that an argument ſo new, and ſo little underſtood, and urged in contradiction to the moſt inveterate prejudices, can carry conviction with it every where, to the length of his own perſuaſion; or prevail at once over the teſtimony of 16 centuries. Yet he may flatter himſelf without vanity, that whether the primitive miracles be thought true or falſe, he ſhall convince the cool and conſiderate part of his readers, that the Proteſtant cauſe has no concern at all with them, and will find it's beſt defence and ſecurity, both againſt the Papiſts and the Free-thinkers, in a total neglect and rejection of them.

This is what the Obſervator himſelf has granted in effect; and what many more, I dare ſay, will grant with him, upon the peruſal of *the Introductory Diſcourſe.* The onely difference is, that every liberal inquirer, who ſeeks truth and inſtruction from the uſe of books, will acknowledge the conviction which he receives with ſome civility towards his inſtructor: whereas this writer ſeems to be of that claſs, who look upon every attempt to inſtruct, as an invaſion on their province, and an affront to their ſufficiency; and make it their buſineſs therefore, to write againſt all who venture to offer their thoughts to the public, without their licenſe. With this hoſtile temper, he attacks the Author of *the Diſcourſe*, tho' he had never perſonally offended him; and labors to fix ſome malignity upon his writings, tho' he owns them at laſt to be innocent; and when he is driven to the acknowledgment of any truth, does it with ſo ill a grace, as ſhews that he has ſome reaſon ſtill within himſelf to wiſh rather that it had been falſe.

To conclude; there are two or three facts, which I would particularly recommend to the reader's conſideration, as being not onely of great weight in the preſent controverſy, but admitted alſo as true by all the adverſaries of the *Introductory Diſcourſe.*

1ſt, That a great part of the primitive miracles, and eſpecially thoſe of the 4th century, were mere fictions, contrived and impoſed by the crafty upon the credulous part of the Chriſtians of that age.

2dly, That if all the miracles of all ages, after the Apoſtles, were found to be of the ſame ſtamp, the authority of the Goſpel could not be ſhaken by it.

3dly, That at the time of the Reformation, the onely time in all hiſtory when the miracles of the Church were freely examined by Chriſtians themſelves, they were all found to be falſe.

Now a proper attention to theſe facts, and the conſequences of them, muſt be ſufficient, one would think, to ſuperſede all farther, diſpute on this quæſtion; and to convince every ſenſible and unprejudiced reader of the reaſonableneſs, not onely of ſuſpecting, but of rejecting all other miracles, except thoſe of the Scriptures. It is certain at leaſt, that it muſt expoſe the abſurdity of theſe Zealots, in alarming a Proteſtant nation with apprehenſions of danger from the free diſcuſſion of an argument, which by their own confeſſion can do no miſchief to any ſyſtem of Chriſtianity, but what is now profeſſed and practiſed by the Church of *Rome.*

REMARKS

ON THE

JESUIT-CABAL.

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WHEN I ſat down to examine this *Defence of Dr. Chapman's Charge*, I could not help amuſing myſelf a while, with the quaintneſs of the *Title-page*; which ſeemed to have undergone ſeveral corrections, and to have coſt the Archdeacon no ſmall pains, before it was reduced to it's preſent form. In the firſt Advertiſement, which was given of it, in the public papers, the Title, if my memory does not deceive me, ſtood thus; *The Jeſuit's Cabinet farther opened*, &c. But the notion of opening a Cabinet, being vulgar, and what every writer would uſe on ſuch an occaſion, was thought unworthy, it ſeems, of the Archdeacon's erudition, and changed therefore, as we now ſee, into the more recondite phraſe, *of opening a Cabal* [1].

In the latter part alſo of the ſame title, ſome alteration appears to have been made, after the book was ſent to the Preſs:

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[1] This change however was not made at once, nor would *Cabinet* have ſlipt ſo eaſily into *Cabal*, if it had not been prepared by ſome prævious emendation: and there is reaſon to think, that, in running over all the changes into which it might naturally be reſolved, *Cabala* was his firſt choice, and inſerted accordingly into the Title, while the book was yet in the Preſs; as a word, the beſt adapted to the profundity of his own erudition, as well as to that myſtery of iniquity, which he was going to lay open. For about the middle of his piece, he refers us, as it were, to the Title, ſo reformed, and ſpeaks in expreſs terms of *Father Harduin*'s *Cabala*. [Def. p. 23.] Yet on more mature deliberation, *Cabala* was finally reduced to *Cabal*; which anſwered more directly to the purpoſe, both of his *Charge and Defence*, and conveyed that very notion, which he there labors to inculcate, of *a number of men*, engaged and confederated in this Jeſuitical plot.

for in the firſt Advertiſement likewiſe, if I remember right, the Author of the Poſtſcript was called *a Scurrilous*, as well as *Declamatory Remarker*; whereas in the publication of it, the word, *Scurrilous*, is now omitted: from what motive, I cannot ſay; but certainly, not from any ſcruples on the Archdeacon's part: for though his friends might perſuade him, that an expreſſion ſo groſs would be too glaring in the firſt page, yet none of them could reſtrain him, from uſing it with all freedom in the ſecond.

From this ſhort view of the Title-page, let us paſs on to the book itſelf; which I take the liberty to call *Dr. Chapman*'s: not becauſe common fame calls it ſo; nor becauſe he had declared a reſolution, of writing and publiſhing *a Defence of his Charge*; but becauſe it is a work of that kind, which no body could have written but himſelf: becauſe the ſtile, the matter, and, to borrow a little of his own language, the whole *figuration and indifferentiſm* of it ſhew *the Jeſuit-Cabal* to be a *Chapman-Performance*.

The firſt paragraph will confirm the truth of it, which begins with theſe words. *A late Author, who, for reaſons beſt known to himſelf, did not care for expreſſing his name,* has appeared very captious and ſplenetic againſt the Rev. *Dr. Chapman.* Now would a writer of any judgement begin an anonymous work, with a piece of raillery of this kind, without feeling, that it would turn upon himſelf, and ſerve as well, for the exordium of his Adverſary's Reply, as his own Defence? their names are equally ſuppreſſed on both ſides; and for reaſons too beſt known to themſelves; yet there is this difference, that the reaſons of the Author of the Poſtſcript, though beſt known to himſelf, may be underſtood likewiſe by others; whereas it would be difficult for Dr. *Chapman*, to aſſign any, but his great modeſty,

deſty, for the concealment of his name; who, from a conſciouſneſs of the public favor, and his own ſuperior merit, can venture to boaſt, in this very paragraph, " of the ſtrength, " the ſpirit and the perſpicuity of his *Archidiaconal Charge*; " and of the honors, which have been paid to him on that ac" count, by ſeveral diſtinct Aſſemblies of the Clergy: can ap" peal to a character, which, it is not poſſible to hurt, with " any man living, who knows him; and promiſe better enter" tainment to his readers, than his *Scurrilous* Antagoniſt can " afford." But whatever his meaning might be, in this firſt ſtroke of his raillery, it happened unluckily for him, that his jeſt was ſpoiled, before it was out, and the Poſtſcript had acquired the name of it's Author, before the *Jeſuit-Cabal* was yet publiſhed.

In the next ſentence however, he profeſſes a moſt intimate acquaintance with his anonymous Adverſary, and to know the very inſide of him; and, with the zeal of another *St. Jerom*, declares, that the evil ſpirit, which prompts him to write at this rate, *is exceſſively galled, and ſtung by the fame and ſucceſs of his writings, and cannot bear the approbation, with which they have been received; but is ſo full of ſpleen and reſentment, that if he did not give a vent to thoſe paſſions, by this ſcurrility of ſneering*, they would certainly burſt him. In anſwer to which, I can take upon me to affirm with great truth, in the name of Dr. *M*——, the Author of the Poſtſcript; that he has never conceived the leaſt degree of ſpleen from any of his performances, though ſome of them have been publiſhed againſt himſelf, but has conſtantly reaped that pleaſure from them, which a liberal mind will always enjoy, from the works of a dull, conceited, bigotted Adverſary, who had forwardly and petulantly attacked him, to find him deſtitute of every talent, which could recommend them to the public; and to ſee the efforts of his zeal and bigottry in great meaſure defeated, by the dullneſs and perplexity, with which he labors to inculcate them. Nor has Dr. *M*—— ever been conſcious, of bearing envy to any man whatſoever, for the ſuperiority of his parts or learning, or, what is more commonly the object of it, his preferments; but finds great reaſon to be content with his preſent ſhare, as well of fortunes, as of credit in the world; and to eſteem that competency of both, with which Providence has bleſſed him, and that leiſure, freedom and independency, which he has always enjoyed, above all the advantages, which he might poſſibly have acquired, by giving a more ambitious turn to his Life and Studies. And he ſhould think more contemptibly of himſelf, than even his enemies affect to do, and that he had ſpent his time and pains to very little purpoſe, if at his years and in his circumſtances, he had ſuffered it to be in the power, I will not ſay, of a little Archdeacon, but of a late great Archbiſhop, to give any diſturbance to the eaſe and quiet of his mind. The ſole diſguſt, which he can receive from any of them, and that, on the publick account, not on his own, is to ſee them encouraging and inculcating ſuch a ſpirit of ſuperſtition and credulity in a Proteſtant Church, as the Papiſts themſelves would be aſhamed of: and he conſiders it, as the chief credit and comfort of his life, that he has the ſenſe to contemn, and the reſolution to oppoſe all ſuch attempts, and their Authors, by whatever name or title they may be dignified and diſtinguiſhed.

With this view he publiſhed a few remarks on *Dr. Chapman*'s *Archidiaconal Charge*, which, inſtead of galling, had given him the pleaſure of laughing at it more heartily, than any compoſition of this kind, which he had ever ſeen, as being, of all others, the moſt elaborately ridiculous. Nor was it the purpoſe of thoſe remarks, to caſt *a blemiſh*, as he intimates, on his envied fame, but to do a piece of juſtice to the real merit both of the *Charge* and it's Author, by that beſt and gentleſt method of correction, which nature has ordained in ſuch a caſe, of laughing him down into his proper rank and character. This was the juſt treatment, which his Charge received, not onely from the Author of the Poſtſcript, but from every body elſe: and this Defence of it, I doubt, will hardly deſerve any other. Of which however, we ſhall be better able to judge, after we have taken a view of thoſe parts of it, which may ſeem to demand a more ſerious regard.

There are two capital points, which he is obliged to make good, if he really means to vindicate his *Charge* from the exceptions of *the Poſtſcript*.

1ſt, That *Father Harduin*'s *plot* has been carried on with great ſucceſs for half a century paſt, and ſpread it's infection far and wide, ſo as to be threatening the greateſt danger, and working incredible miſchief at this very time, to the religion, learning and liberty of all Proteſtants.

2dly, That the writings and authority of *St. Jerom* are of peculiar ſervice, to confirm the religion of Proteſtants, in oppoſition to the preſent worſhip and religion of the Papiſts.

As to the firſt of theſe points, which is the principal ſubject of his *Charge*, the diſpute between us is, not about the natural tendency of the Jeſuit's ſcheme; or the miſchiefs, which it might have wrought, if it had met with a general reception in the world; or the ſentiments of a few particular men, or the private wiſhes of the whole body of the Jeſuits, concerning it; but the ſole quæſtion is, whether it has ever found ſuch a degree of credit, and been carried ſo far into execution, as to create any real danger, or to work any actual miſchief to the Proteſtant cauſe, in any country whatſoever, and eſpecially in *England*, where this alarm was given.

This, I ſay, is the ſingle point in the diſpute: yet when we come to examine, what new light the Archdeacon has produced, towards clearing up this quæſtion of fact, we find nothing more in his *Defence*, than what we had ſeen before in his charge; a cloud of authorities, without any weight; an oſtentation of learning, without ſenſe; his affirmations refuted by his conceſſions; till the ſumm of his defence is not onely reduced to nothing, but the balance turned againſt himſelf; as every one muſt ſee, who will take the pains, to caſt up the account, and weigh the particular articles on the one ſide, againſt thoſe of the other.

For inſtance; on the affirmative ſide, he ſets forth;

1ſt, " That *Father Harduin*'s obnoxious pieces were licenſed " by *two Provincials of the Jeſuits*, upon a certificate from three " Divines of the ſame order, that they contained nothing re- " pugnant to the Catholic faith and good morals [1].

2dly, " That *Cardinal de Biſſy* gave broad hints, in his pa- " ſtoral inſtructions, of his favorable inclinations to the Jeſuit's " ſcheme [2].

3dly, " That ſeven or eight particular men, in different " parts of *Europe*, *M. Ballonſeaux*, a Preſident of the Senate at " *Luxembourg*; a Gentleman at *Amſterdam*; the Editor of *Harduin*'s works; *M. Perchambaud*, a Preſident of the Parliament " of *Bretagne*; a litterary Journaliſt at the *Hague*; an anony- " mous writer of great fire and zeal; an Antiquarian of " no ſmall note, at *Lyons*; had all of them done, or ſaid,

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[1] See Def. p. 8, 9.

[2] p. 19.

“ or written ſomething or other, in favor of *Harduin*'s “ ſcheme [1].

All which teſtimonics he cloſes with a character of *Harduin*, given in the Proteſtant acts of *Leipſic*, 1735; in which he is declared to be a writer of *a wonderfull genius, whoſe works will give pleaſure to all, who read them, though they breath in all parts more of genius, than of truth* [2].

This is the ſumm of all the poſitive evidence, by which he pretends to demonſtrate the ſucceſs and danger of this Jeſuitical ſcheme; in abatement of which, he grants at the ſame time,

1ſt, “ That the Superiors, and Principals of all the Colleges “ and Societies of the Jeſuits in *France*, publiſhed a formal “ proteſtation againſt it, in the name of their whole “ Order, and obliged *Harduin* publickly to retract it. And “ that he does not quæſtion the ſincerity of thoſe Su-“ periors [3].

2dly, “ That when Cardinal *de Biſſy* ventured to publiſh “ ſome hints in favor of it, five or ſix Biſhops made an “ outcry againſt him to the King [4].

3dly, “ That the Critics and Scholars in general of all coun-“ tries, treated it as an extravagant, chimerical and im-“ practicable whim [5]: that all the ingenuous among the “ *Jeſuits themſelves*, many *Benedictins and Sorboniſts*, and “ ſeveral other orders in *France and Italy*, ſharply declared “ their abhorrence of it: that in particular, the learned “ Fathers *Tournemine and Grainville*, made ſtrong declara-“ tions againſt it; and the men of ſenſe and learning in

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[1] P. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21.

[2] P. 21, 22.

[3] See Charge, p. 17. note (†) Def. p. 10, 11.

[4] Def. p. 19.

[5] Charge, p. 10, 11, 20. Def. 5, 6.

" *Rome*, ſuch as *Quirini and Fontanini* talked with great
" freedom and abhorrence of it, and as he believes, with
" great ſincerity and truth [1].

From this abſtract of what he has affirmed on the one ſide, and granted on the other, the reader will ſee at once, that his affirmative proofs are infinitely overbalanced by his negative conceſſions.

He will ſee, that the ſolemn and ſincere proteſtation of all the Superiors of the Jeſuits, muſt far outweigh *the Licenſe of a Provincial*; a mere matter of form; and reaching no farther, than to teſtify the conſiſtency of the Scheme with the *Catholic faith and good manners.*

That the loud remonſtrances of five or ſix Biſhops would have a greater effect, than the hints onely of a ſingle Cardinal.

That the general conſent of the Critics and Scholars of all countries and Sects; *Jeſuits*, *Benedictins*, *Sorboniſts*, and ſeveral other Orders, *in France and Italy*, with all the men of learning in *Rome*, is of much greater authority, than the opinions of ſeven or eight private men, of what rank or condition ſoever. In ſhort, he will ſee, I ſay, at once, that neither the Archdeacon's *Charge* nor *Defence*, can have any thing rational or ſolid in it, or worthy of any other treatment, but what it has met with, of being contemned and laughed at by all men of ſober ſenſe. For ſhould we wave all his conceſſions, and refer the diſpute to the ſole merit of his poſitive teſtimonies; we ſhall find them utterly trifling and impertinent, and of no ſignificancy at all towards the confirmation of his argument; amounting, as we have ſeen, to nothing more than this, *that all people admired the great parts and erudition of Father Harduin, and ſome few, here and there,* of leſs learning, yet as much enthuſiaſm

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[1] See Charge, p. 11, 20. Def. p. 5, 6, 10, 18, 24, &c.

thuſiaſm perhaps, ſeemed alſo to approve his Scheme. And was any Scheme ever publiſhed by a man of reputation, how extravagant and chimerical ſoever, which had not the luck, to find ſome admirers, and to ſtrike the fancy of a few, as wrong-headed and wild as the Author himſelf? yet in the preſent caſe, it is very remarkable, that, in *England*, where this alarm was given, not ſo much as a ſingle perſon has ever been ſaid, or ſuſpected, to have paid the leaſt regard to it.

But let us go ſtill farther, and grant the Archdeacon much more, than he can either claim, or deſire for the advantage of his cauſe, that the whole Romiſh Church is unanimous and zealous in the defence of *Harduin*'s Scheme; yet even on this hypotheſis, it would be ridiculous, to talk of any particular danger or miſchief from it to Proteſtants, while they continue firm and united in their contempt of it; as it is evident from fact and experience: for inſtance; there are no articles of Popery ſo univerſally profeſſed in that Church, as the *Supremacy of the Pope*, and *Tranſubſtantiation*; nor any, ſo directly fatal to Proteſtantiſm, wherever they are received in any country: but though they are enforced by the whole united power of the Romiſh Church, and with many ſubtil arguments both from reaſon and Scripture, yet Proteſtants are under no particular alarm, nor think themſelves in any immediate danger on that account; becauſe they have the ſenſe and learning, to diſcern the abſurdity of them, and their miſchievous effects on Society in general, as well as on the Proteſtant religion in particular. Much leſs can they apprehend any harm from the Jeſuit's whim, which, if it had not been too extravagant, might indeed have raiſed a party for it among the Romaniſts, by it's tendency to advance the power of the Pope and the Church, but has no relation whatſoever to Proteſtants; nor any thing in it, that could invite any party or Sect of that profeſſion to embrace it.

Should we ſuppoſe then, that the Papiſts were either divided about it, or united in it's defence; the ſole effect, which could reaſonably be expected in either caſe, would finally turn to the hurt, not of Proteſtantiſm, but of Popery itſelf. For by creating a diviſion in that Church, it muſt in ſome meaſure weaken the ſtrength of the whole; or by uniting the whole in it's ſupport, would gradually reduce it again to that ſtate of ignorance and implicit credulity, from which our Anceſtors were delivered by the Reformation; and by reſtraining the learning and religion of their Clergy, to Church-traditions, Canons, and Papal decrees, would render them onely leſs formidable, and more contemptible to the Proteſtants. To alarm us therefore with a Scheme, which, though calculated to ſerve ſome particular purpoſes of Popery, was yet found too chimerical by Papiſts themſelves, to be applied to any purpoſe, is as contradictory to common ſenſe and reaſon, as the abſurd conceit of the Jeſuit on which it is gounded,

The Archdeacon however takes great pains to ſhew, that the Proteſtants abroad made vehement outcries againſt it, as *a refinement of the whole Jeſuitical order*, and dangerous conſequently to their religion. And it is not to be wondered at, that a Scheme of that nature, publiſhed by a man of *Harduin*'s character, ſhould at firſt create a ſuſpicion among Proteſtants, of being more deeply rooted and ſtrongly ſupported, than it afterwards appeared to be: or till *ſome good men* among them, as the Archdeacon ſays, perceived it to be *too extravagant to do any miſchief* [1]. Yet, notwithſtanding the authority of theſe *good men*, there were others, it ſeems, not ſo good perhaps, yet more ſagacious,

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[1] See Charge, p. 20.

gacious, who continued ſtill to cry out againſt it as loudly as ever. Nor is this likewiſe ſtrange, that in the Proteſtant countries abroad, there ſhould be a ſort of men, whom we frequently ſee at home, who from motives of vanity, or intereſt, or ambition, yet under a maſk always of religion, are catching all occaſions of recommending themſelves to public fame and honors, by an affected oſtentation of their zeal, and learning and ſervices to the Church: and it is eaſy to imagine, how the example of that *late great ornament of Berlin, Mr. La Croze*, whoſe teſtimony makes ſuch a figure in this Defence, might excite the zeal and emulation of the *Great Archdeacon of Sudbury*, and ſuggeſt to him the plan, and ſubject of his Charge.

But tho' he has offered nothing in this Defence, which, in any light or view, tends to confirm the argument of his Charge; yet it is curious to obſerve, that he makes frequent uſe of ſeveral topics, which directly overthrow it. For example, in demonſtrating the great danger of *Harduin*'s Scheme, he often reminds us, how all the Proteſtants, from the beginning to this day, have conſtantly decried and rejected it. Now if in any of thoſe Aſſemblies of the Clergy to which his *Charge* was addreſſed, any one had riſen up in oppoſition to him, with intent to calm thoſe terrors which he had been infuſing, what could he have ſaid more effectual to allay them, than what the Archdeacon had applied to excite them? By aſſuring his Reverend brethren, " that whatever he had been declaring to them with ſo much " ſolemnity concerning the dangers of the plot, they need not " be under any concern or alarm about it: for tho' the *Romaniſts* might in ſome meaſure be divided about it, the *Proteſtants* were all firm to a man, in their contempt and rejec" tion of it: that half a century was now paſt, in which it had

" been exerting all it's force, without making the leaſt impreſſion " on any Proteſtant Church or Sect whatſoever: that in *England* eſpecially, where this alarm was now given, not a ſingle " ſoul was ever ſuſpected of being tainted with it in any degree: " that their own ignorance of this pretended danger was a ſure " proof, that there was really none: and that it was a groſs " inſult upon the ſenſe, the judgement and the vigilance of the " *Engliſh* Clergy, to talk to them with ſuch aſſurance of a deſperate plot, and *the incredible miſchiefs* which it had been " working to their religion for ſo many years, and which none " of them, all that time, had either the ſagacity to diſcover, " or the zeal to oppoſe, but their worthy Archdeacon. That " they ſhould reflect on what he himſelf had told them in this " very *Charge*, how the plot could never obtain it's end, *till all* " *the writers and monuments of Antiquity, which obſtructed it, were* " *cancelled and exterminated*; *and till the Jeſuits, by their arts,* " *had diffuſed a general neglect and diſregard of them among the* " *Proteſtants* [1]. That not one of all thoſe antient writers " had yet been cancelled, nor the leaſt diſregard to them " diffuſed by Jeſuitical arts, thro' any Proteſtant country: " whence it was evident to every man of ſenſe, that the plot " had utterly miſcarried from the very beginning, and that " they were as remote from any dangers of it at this day, as " their Fathers had been before them, and in ſhort, that, from " the firſt to the laſt, there never was nor ever could be any " danger in it at all."

If this alone, I ſay, had been urged in anſwer to his Charge, at the time when it was delivered, as it might have been with the ſtricteſt truth, it muſt needs have convinced the audience, that all the terrors, with which the Archdeacon had been alarming

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[1] See Charge, p. 9.

ing them, were but affected or imaginary, and his tragical repreſentation of them a mere farce and piece of mockery; which the experience of fifty years, and of all Proteſtant Churches had utterly confuted.

Again, We may obſerve, both from his *Charge and the Defence* of it, that *the Critics, the ſcholars and the learned* are ſuppoſed by him in general, to conſider the Jeſuit's Scheme as *an extravagant, impracticable and ſenſeleſs whim* [1], which is ſufficient likewiſe of itſelf, to refute all pretence of danger from it. For if the learned be againſt it, who can be for it? The ſucceſs of it muſt neceſſarily depend on the judgement of the learned; being a project of that kind, which the multitude can have no notion of, but from their teſtimony and recommendation. If it had offered to the public ſome refined point of doctrine, or principle of devotion, proper to excite a ſpirit of fanaticiſm or enthuſiaſm in weak and pious Chriſtians, it might indeed have reached to the populace, and proved dangerous in the iſſue to the peace of our Church: but as it is a quæſtion of dry criticiſm, without any ſuch charm in it, and which learning alone muſt decide, the Proteſtants cannot poſſibly receive any hurt from it, till it be firſt authoriſed by the men of ſenſe and learning of their own profeſſion.

Yet the Archdeacon cannot help perſuading himſelf, that the very populace are all attentive, and taking part in this diſpute: for when Dr. *M—n* treats the Jeſuit's Scheme as a *ſilly whim*, and worthy onely to be laughed at by men of ſenſe; he reproves him with his uſual gravity, and ſays; *that tho' he is ſo ignorant himſelf, to be thus deluded, he muſt not expect, that even the multitude with us, are now to be ſo cajoled and blinded* [2]. For *now*, ſince his *Charge* is made public, he fancies without doubt, that it is to be found on every ſtall in *London*; and that every ſoul, who can read, is let into the Secret of *Harduin's plot*, and admiring *the ſtrength, and ſpirit, and perſpicuity* of language, in which he has laid open all the dark deſigns and *incredible miſchiefs* of this *Jeſuit-Cabal.*

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[1] Def. p. 5, 6, &c.

[2] Def. p. 14.

I have hitherto been attempting to ſhew, how all his proofs and evidences of the plot tend onely to contradict his own account of it: yet I have one teſtimony againſt it ſtill behind, which he will own to be of more weight, than all the reſt; I mean the authority of his own dear Self: who, in one of his books, publiſhed ſome years ago, taking occaſion to ſpeak of *Father Harduin's Scheme*, declares it to be both *paradoxical and inſignificant* [1]. Such was his opinion of it, before he had cooked up the plan of his *Charge*. But the *inſignificancy* of the thing, which would have diſcouraged any other man from meddling with it, was the very motive, which prompted the Archdeacon to take it for his theme. He knew, that he could never diſplay his wit and eloquence, with ſuch advantage, as by raiſing wonders out of nothing, and from an *inſignificant paradox*, extorting the thanks and applauſes of *ſeveral diſtinct aſſemblies of the Clergy.*

Being aware however, that he might be driven, to give up the original Scheme of the Jeſuit, as *ſtale and obſolete*, he had projected a retreat, to which he now recurs, and inſiſts, *that one part of his ſtory is ſo far from being ſtale, that it never came to light till* 1733. *and* 1741. Strange! that it ſhould twice come to light, within the compaſs of 8 years, yet want to be brought to light a 3d time, within 5 years more. But ſo it was, that *no advice or account had ever been given of it in the Engliſh tongue*, as he tells us, *by any one before himſelf, not even by the late ingenious improvers of M. Bayle's Dictionary* [2]. Here then he takes

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[1] Dr. C.'s Euſeb. Vol. 1. p. 343.

[2] Def. p. 12.

heart again, and begins to plume himſelf as much as ever, on the diſcovery of a 2d plot, "more directly ſubſervient, he ſays, "to the Popiſh cauſe, and more malignant ſtill to antiquity "than the firſt; in confounding the hiſtory of 800 years, and "in the open proſcription even of the ***Roman Digeſt*** and *Codes*, "*both Theodoſian and Juſtinianean*, to make way for the *Papal* "*Codes* and *Canon Law:* and moreover, in a general maſſacre "of all the antient writers and monuments of the Church, to "the middle of the 13th century: and all this concluded with "a daring abuſe on the whole Greek text of the New Teſta-"ment, as a verſion onely of the Vulgate Latin: which laſt "was to be ſet up as the onely authentic text of the whole "Scripture [1]."

This at laſt was *the Snake in the graſs*, which he talks of; or the fatal and poyſonous part of the Scheme, which had hitherto been kept out of ſight. But when the head of the Snake was cut off, is it not childiſh, to make an outcry of danger, becauſe the tail ſeemed ſtill to move? When the original Scheme had ſo long been exploded, and loſt all power of doing miſchief, is it poſſible, that any appendix, or freſh conceit, formed by the ſame Jeſuit, and on the ſame principles, ſhould give any juſt alarm, or excite the attention of men of ſenſe? This new plot came *firſt to light*, he ſays, *in* 1733: let him tell us then, what hurt it has any where done, for theſe 14 years paſt. The capital miſchief, which it aims at, and by which alone Proteſtants can be affected, is, to deprive them of their *Greek copies of the New Teſtament*, and to ſlip *the Vulgate Latin* into their hands, as the more authentic text. Yet it is certain, not onely, that no Proteſtant Church, but that no ſingle Proteſtant in his ſenſes has ever been induced to ſubmit to ſuch an exchange. Whatever then any Jeſuit, or the whole body of them may project or wiſh on this article, it muſt be wholly inſignificant to Proteſtants; in whoſe cuſtody, the *Greek text* will always reſt ſecure from the danger, of being either privately ſtollen, or forcibly extorted out of their hands.

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[1] Def. p. 13.

But as ſilly as all this muſt neceſſarily appear to every ſenſible reader, we find him wonderfull elate, on the merit of being the firſt diſcoverer of it; and inſulting his Adverſary upon it, with much contempt, " was this too a tale, ſays he, which deſerved " no alarm or regard among our Clergy? And was this good " Remarker ſo fond of his *ſtales and obſoletes*, for the ſake of " making a little figure with them, that he could onely attend " to what was publiſhed about forty years ago, and not hearken " to the more recent ſtrokes of the Jeſuit, and paſs them all " over in the moſt profound ſilence? The very mirror this, of " Proteſtant candor and impartiality, towards both the Arch- " deacon and the Jeſuit [1]!"

But to return to *Father Harduin*'s plot, Dr. *M——n* had affirmed of it in the Poſtſcript, that *it was contemned particularly at Rome, as the delirium of a doting Critic.* On which the Archdeacon takes occaſion to animadvert, in ſo refined a ſtrain, both of reaſon and raillery, that I muſt beg leave to tranſcribe the intire paſſage, becauſe no abſtract could poſſibly do juſtice to it. Take it then in his own words.—

" As to our Author's particular information of the great " contempt of *Father Harduin at Rome*, as if there his whole " Syſtem was treated, as *a mere delirium of a doting Critic*, it " has no great weight with me in it's preſent form, when I " onely look back to ſome former informations, which were " given us, of a certain *fine column near the Capitol at Rome:* nor

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[1] Def. p. 13.

" do I think, that every man, who is curious in *delineating and* " *illuſtrating an old Phallus or Priapus,* is immediately to be " truſted, for explaning the genuin thoughts of *Italian Mon-* " *aſtics*, or *a Roman Conclave.* Some indeed, I know, ſuch as " *Fontanini* and *Quirini*, have talked at *Rome*, with great free- " dom and abhorrence of *Harduin*'s projects, and I believe too " with great ſincerity and truth. But others may talk ſo to a " Proteſtant Traveller, or to ſome tender Catholic conſciences, " though privately among confidents, they may hug and ap- " plaud the Scheme, and ſpur on the moſt vigorous proſecu- " tion of it, &c. [1]."

Here we ſee, how the Archdeacon, who never travelled farther, than from his College to *Lambeth*, profeſſes to know, not onely what was ſaid, but what was thought at *Rome*, yet will not allow Dr. *M——n*, who ſpent ſeveral months in that City, to be capable of giving any information, of what he had either ſeen or heard in it. *I know*, ſays he, *that ſuch men as Fontanini and Qurini, talked with great abhorrence of Harduin's projects.* Very familiar truly! one would imagine him to be ſpeaking of his intimate acquaintance. *Fontanini* was an Archbiſhop, of diſtinguiſhed learning and politeneſs, whom Dr. *M——n* ſaw almoſt every day during his ſtay at *Rome*; and, by the advantage of his friendſhip, had the opportunity of many free converſations at his houſe, with perſons of the firſt diſtinction, both for their quality and litterature; and among the reſt, with the Pope now reigning; and after he left *Rome*, kept up a correſpondence of letters with him, to the time of his death. But, what relates more to the preſent purpoſe, the character of *Harduin*'s plot, which is ſaid in the Poſtſcript, to have obtained at *Rome*, *of being the delirium of a doting Critic*, is expreſſed in the very words, in which he received it from Monſignor *Fontanini*; whoſe known attachment and relation to that Court muſt perſuade us, that he would not have uſed any language on that ſubject, which could poſſibly give offence there.

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[1] p. 23.

But the Archdeacon aſſigns two reaſons, why Dr. *M——n*'s *informations from Rome*, ought not to be credited. Firſt, becauſe the Dr. had given ſome *falſe informations*, it ſeems, before, *concerning a certain fine column near the Capitol.* It puzzled me a while to gueſs, what he could mean by this inſinuation: for the Dr. had never given any information about any *column* whatſoever, nor ever heard of any *fine one*, near the *Capitol*, except the *Trajan and Antonin Columns*, which are not far from it. But I found upon recollection, that this dark hint related to a certain antique ſtone, of a Cylindrical form, with the names of about *thirty old Roman Legions* upon it, which Dr. *M——n* had tranſcribed, for the uſe of a former treatiſe, from a printed copy of ſome of the Editors of thoſe antient Inſcriptions: which tranſcript the Archdeacon was pleaſed to cenſure, as incorrect, becauſe it differed from the copies of *the great Boiſſard and Gruter*, as he calls them, and unleſs they were miſtaken, which he could not believe, the Dr.'s copy had not given the true reading [1]. But whatever he may believe or not believe, it is certain, that the one or the other, or both of them, more probably, were miſtaken; becauſe they vary from each other, more than once or twice, in their different copies of the ſame inſcription [2]. Yet whatever difference there may be in any copies, or whatever error in the Dr.'s, the ſole purpoſe, for which it was alledged by him, is evidently confirmed by them all.

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[1] See Dr. *Chapman*'s Letter annexed to Obſervations on the Epiſtles of Cic. and Brut. p. 427.

[2] Boiſſard. Par. 3. 102. Grut. Inſcr. p. 513.

It is pleaſant however to obſerve, how the Archdeacon, out of a fondneſs for his criticiſm, grew fond of this old Stone, and erected it preſently into *a Column. I have ſo much regard,* ſays he, *for that Column, as to wiſh, that Dr. M——n had examined and repreſented it with a little more accuracy* [1]*:* and in this Defence, he has now dreſſed it up into a *fine Column.* Yet ſhould we aſk him of what Order, he would be puzzled how to anſwer; and more ſurprized ſtill, if it ſhould appear at laſt to be *no Column* at all, but a *Cylindrical Pedeſtal* of ſome military Statue, erected antiently upon it by the army, with the names of the ſeveral Legions inſcribed, which had contributed to it's dedication [2]. But whatever it might have been in it's original form, yet at preſent, it has ſo little pretenſion to any ſort of finery, that the rolling-ſtone in any garden would make juſt as *fine a Column,* if it were ſet upright onely, on either of it's ends, and, if inſcribed with the names of our ſtanding regiments, as valuable *a Column* too.

But the Archdeacon's view in this reflection was, to ſhew how idly Dr. *M——n* had ſpent his time in *Rome,* by neglecting to bring back with him an accurate copy of this Inſcription, from his own ſurvey of it. And whatever ſhame may be due to him on that account, the Dr, I dare ſay, will take it all to himſelf, and freely confeſs, that he never ſo much as ſaw, or made any inquiry after it. He knew, that it had been tranſcribed and publiſhed by ſeveral different hands, and was not invited either by any beauty of the ſtone, or curioſity of the inſcription, to ſpend any of his time about it. Yet he may venture to ſay without vanity, that he has given the public ſome *informations from Rome,* which it ill becomes an Engliſh Archdeacon to take ſuch pains to diſcredit; and which, for their uſe and impor-

[1] See Dr. C's. Letter, ibid. [2] Gruter. ibid.

tance to the Proteſtant religion, have paſſed through ſeveral editions in our own country, as well as tranſlations into the languages of other countries, where Proteſtants reſide. The Papiſts indeed, and a few Zealots of our own Church, ſcarce worthy of the name of Proteſtants, have made it their buſineſs, as well as this Archdeacon, to decry *Dr. M——n's informations from Rome*, yet not a ſingle article of them has ever been diſproved by any: and when a Proteſtant Divine has the aſſurance, to warn people againſt them in this public manner, his zeal muſt flow from ſome ſecret motives of more weight with him, than his pretended regard either to the Proteſtant cauſe, or to an old Inſcription, of no uſe or ſignificancy to any cauſe whatſoever.

The ſecond reaſon, which he gives for diſcrediting Dr. *M——n's informations from Rome*, is ſtill more curious: becauſe the Dr, in a latin work, in which he had delineated and explaned many original pieces of claſſical antiquity, from his own collection, had exhibited the figure of an old *Phallus and Priapus*. For ſuch a man, he ſays, *is not to be truſted, for explaning the genuin thoughts of Italian Monaſtics, or a Roman Conclave.* Yet Dr. *M——n* has done nothing more in this caſe, than what his great *Boiſſard and Gruter:* than what *Pignorius*, *Begerus*, *Cauſæus*, *Bonanni*, *Montfaucon*, &c. in ſhort, what every man, of what character, country, or religion ſoever, who has publiſhed collections of Antiquities, or undertaken to explane the manners and rites of the Gentile world, had conſtantly done before him. And yet the Dr. before he entered upon that particular argument, took care to guard himſelf from any juſt cenſure, and obviate all offence to his weaker readers, by premiſing the example, not onely of thoſe learned moderns, but an authority ſtill much greater, even of the Fathers of the Primitive Church, in whoſe words he has happened to explane the very groſſeſt part of his ſubject: ſo that whatever ſhame may be thought due to him, for the *illuſtration of this old Phallus*, it muſt finally reſt upon them.

Such was the ground of the Archdeacon's cenſure, as far as I have been able to diſcover it; but as to the meaning of it, it is not in my power to find it out. All that I can pretend to ſay, of ſuch a medley of ſtrange words, as they are jumbled together in this paragraph, is, that his *fine Column*, *old Phallus*, *Italian Monaſtics*, *and Roman Conclave*, make a compoſition of ſuch *ſtrong*, *ſpirited*, *and perſpicuous* nonſenſe, as no other writer, but with the ſame vivacity of genius, and the ſame profundity of erudition, could poſſibly produce.

After he has thus vindicated himſelf, with regard to his diſcovery of the *Jeſuit's plot*, and ſet forth his great ſervices to the public, in alarming us ſo ſeaſonably with the dangers of it, he procedes, to do juſtice alſo to his friends, *the Tunſtalls and the Marklands*, by clearing them from the ſuſpicion of having any ſhare in it. The warmth of his friendſhip would not ſuffer him, to overlook the leaſt touch of mere raillery, on perſons ſo dear to him. He imagined preſently that Dr. *M——n* took them to be real *Loyolites*, and actually engaged with the Jeſuits abroad, and that he was repreſenting them as ſuch to the whole kingdom; upon which, he takes occaſion, to make here a public and ſolemn declaration, *that he had never any thought at all*, *of impeaching them*; *that they bear no reſemblance to the true Loyolites*, have none of the marks upon them, *and could not therefore be the object of his caveat* [1]*:* And from this *outcry againſt them*, as he calls it, he enters into a formal defence of all *the true and ſolid Critics*, whether living or dead, whether of our own or of foreign countries; whom he declares, " *to deſerve love and uni-*

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[1] Def. p. 25, 26.

“ *verſal eſteem, as the firmeſt ſupports of* truth and erudition; “ while thoſe furious Drawcanſers, who procede not by prin- “ ciples of criticiſm, but of party and policy, and would cut “ off at random, againſt all rules of true Critique, whole cen- “ turies of Authors, eccleſiaſtical and profane, and diffuſe an “ univerſal ſcepticiſm, as to monuments of antiquity, deſerve “ to be marked out, as peſts to the republic of letters [1].

Since then he has thought fit, to be ſo ſerious, on ſo ſlight an occaſion, I find myſelf obliged to be ſerious too, and to make a declaration alſo in my turn, on the part of Dr. *M—n*; that he had no real intention, any more than the Archdeacon himſelf, to impeach thoſe learned Gentlemen of any plot whatſoever; nor the leaſt deſign to defraud them of that *amiable* character, which they have acquired with ſo much pains and ſtudy, *of true and ſolid Critics.* But as no mortal can know the real motives of action in another; and as the evidence eſpecially of plots, turns not upon intentions, but overt-acts, ſo the whole, which I can declare of them with certainty is; that their late attempts againſt the works of *Cicero*, which bear ſome reſemblance of *the Jeſuit's plot*, and ſeem to flow from the ſame *malign ſpirit againſt the Antients*, have been found upon trial, to be perfectly innocent, and incapable of doing the leaſt hurt to any thing whatſoever; and will conſequently be as little known or regarded by the next generation, as the whimſical conceit of *Harduin* was by the preſent.

We are now come to the ſecond point, which the Archdeacon, as I have ſaid, is obliged to make good, if he would vindicate his *Charge*, from the exceptions of the *Poſtſcript*. He has declared in that *Charge*, that the antient Fathers of the Church, and eſpecially *the Clements, the Chryſoſtoms, the Jeroms,*

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[1] P. 26.

and the Auſtins, are *an armoury*, as he calls it, *on the Proteſtant ſide, continually galling the Papiſts in ſome tender part, and expoſing to every common eye, the unſcriptural and unprimitive crudities of the Romiſh principles and practices* [1]. In contradiction to which, it is affirmed by Dr. *M——n* in his *Poſtſcript*, " that the autho-" rity of thoſe very Fathers, as it is recommended and enfor-" ced by the Archdeacon, would betray us into Popery; and " in particular, that *Chryſoſtom, Jerom and Auſtin*, had ſeve-" rally taught and practiſed, and warmly recommended to the " practice of all Chriſtians, certain rites and doctrines, which, " from their example and authority, are practiſed at this day " by the Romiſh Church, but rejected by all Proteſtant " Churches, *as unſcriptural, ſuperſtitious, and idolatrous* [2].

This is the ſubject of the diſpute between the Author of *the Charge*, and the Author of *the Poſtſcript:* the laſt of whom, in order to cut off all unneceſſary wrangling, and to reduce the controverſy to as ſhort an iſſue, as the nature of a Poſtſcript required, choſe to refer the merit of it to a few facts and inſtances, drawn ſingly from *St. Jerom*, becauſe, of all the Fathers, he perceived him to be the peculiar favorite of the Archdeacon. Now this method of proceding is clear and direct, and what every one would chuſe to purſue, who ſeeks nothing but the truth: and if that had been the Archdeacon's view, he ought to have given a direct anſwer to thoſe facts; or to have balanced them at leaſt by oppoſite facts drawn from the ſame Father, ſtrong and explicit in favor of the Proteſtant cauſe, as it ſtands oppoſed to that of the Papiſts.

But inſtead of this, the whole buſineſs of his *Defence* is, to draw us away from the real ſubject, and to amuſe us with harangues quite foreign to it; " on the reverence due to primitive antiquity; on the authority of the Fathers taken collectively; on the public doctrine of the antient Churches; and particularly, on the admirable abilities, innumerable excellencies, and treaſures of learning to be found in *St. Jerom*; in conſideration of which, all their blemiſhes, failings and peccancies ought to be overlooked; and whatever they may have dropt of *a Popiſh caſt*, there wants no apology for it, he ſays, nor is there any reaſon to expect, that he ſhould be reſponſible for the errors or imprudences of a *Jerom*, becauſe he is ſuppoſed to be a favorite with him [1].”

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[1] See Charge, p. 2, 6.

[2] Poſtſcript of the Introd. Diſc. p. 68.

From this evaſive way of treating the ſubject, and eluding the force of plain facts, one would be apt to imagine, that he was giving up the quæſtion, and yielding the cauſe to his Adverſary: yet far from any ſuch thought, he aſſures us, “ that all the facts and inſtances, which have been or can be produced from *St. Jerom*, or any of the Fathers, are nothing more than *a few ſlight trimmings of Popery*, which may indeed receive ſome countenance from them, but that he will engage, from thoſe Fathers alone, effectually to confute all the principal errors of the Romaniſts [2]. Why does he not do it then, and put an end to the controverſy at once both with them and with me? and why does he chuſe to harangue ſtill at large; neither producing any facts on his own ſide, nor taking notice of thoſe alledged on the other; yet giving his adverſary all the while, no other title, than that of *a Declamatory Remarker*; though he grounds his whole argument on allowed facts, and requires a diſtinct anſwer to them, and refers the deciſion of the cauſe to the merit of that anſwer.

But what is ſtill more ſhamefull, he declares, “ that he never appealed to any of the Antient Fathers ſingly, nor in par-

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[1] Jeſ-Cabal, p. 34, 36.

[2] Ib. 35.

" ticular to *Chryſoſtom*, *Jerom or Auſtin*; for knowing well " what he did, he appealed onely to the primitive Fathers at " large, or to the whole body of them taken collectively, but " that inſtead of *the Fathers in general*, which was his expreſſion, the Gentleman had ſlipt in, *Chryſoſtom*, *Jerom and Auſtin*, to whom he did not appeal, nor ever intended to appeal [1]." And this indeed, if true, muſt needs be thought a ſlippery trick, to put ſuch a change upon the good Archdeacon. Let us inquire then, how the caſe really ſtands; and whether this piece of craft, which he imputes to Dr. *M—n*, be not a proof onely of his greater diſingenuity, and a fiction of his own, contrived to excuſe himſelf from acting that mortifying part, which candor and truth preſcribe, but his pride cannot ſubmit to, of acknowledging himſelf confuted.

In the beginning of his *Archidiaconal Charge*, where he opens the general plan of Father *Harduin*'s *plot*, he ſpeaks indeed, in general, of the *antient Fathers*, as deſtined to deſtruction by that Jeſuit, on account of their ſervices to the Proteſtant cauſe [2]. Then, in deſcribing the terrible havock, which the plot had made among the writers of Antiquity both Greek and Latin, he tells us, that *this was onely the introduction to the more daring ſtroke, by which the Clements, the Chryſoſtoms, the Jeroms, and the Auſtins were to fall next in the Maſſacre, as being too eloquent and primitive for a Jeſuit's palate* [3]. And laſtly, when he comes to ſet forth the probability of it's ſucceſs, he ſays, *that the libertines and ſceptics would of courſe rejoice in it, and give up even their favorites, Virgil and Horace, &c. on condition onely, that the Jeroms might be ſacrificed with them* [4]. Thus he firſt mentions *the antient Fathers at large, as an armoury on the Proteſtant ſide*; then ſpecifies, what particular Fathers he means, as the moſt obnoxious on that account to the Jeſuit; and laſtly, takes occaſion to ſignify, that, of the four, whom he ſo ſpecifies, *Jerom* was the moſt eminently and univerſally odious to all the enemies of Proteſtantiſm, both *Papiſts and Sceptics.*

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[1] Jeſ-Cab. 33, 34.

[2] Charge, p. 2.

[3] Ib. p. 6.

[4] Ib. 22.

This is his whole account of the antient Fathers, with regard to their being *an armoury on the Proteſtant ſide:* and could any one, who was diſpoſed to conteſt it with him, act more candidly and pertinently, than by referring the diſpute, to the caracter of that ſingle Father, on whom he himſelf lays the greateſt ſtreſs? Or could any one, on the other hand, act more weakly and diſingenuouſly, than he has done in the preſent caſe, by diſclaming an appeal to *any of the antient Fathers ſingly?* For, in our controverſy with the Papiſts, the whole collective body of them could not poſſibly have any weight, if each of them taken ſingly be found to have none at all: and if he dares not truſt his cauſe to thoſe particular Fathers, whom he himſelf has diſtinguiſhed, *as the peculiar armoury of Proteſtants,* and declared *to be grievous thorns in the ſides of the Papiſts* [1], it is childiſh to pretend, that any acceſſion of the reſt, who are leſs uſefull to us, and leſs grievous to our enemies, could add any new ſtrength to it. Yet thus he ſhuffles on; chuſing to recurr rather to any ſhift, and to deny even what he has ſaid, than to give a direct anſwer to facts, which would expoſe the folly and bigottry of his principles.

And to divert the attention of the reader from the merits of the cauſe, and raiſe his indignation at the ſame time againſt Dr. *M—n,* he makes a wretched outcry againſt him, for " disfi-" guring and depreciating the virtues and abilities of the antient

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[1] Jeſ-Cabal, p. 35.

" Fathers; exaggerating their failings and peccancies; caſting " the worſt conſtruction on their actions and ſayings; painting " them malignantly in the moſt hideous colors of folly, ſuperſtition or knavery; and putting them to a worſe torture, " than their Heathen Perſecutors had ever done, and to a fiery " trial, which no writers in the world had ever ſuffered [1];" with a great deal more of the ſame declamatory ſtuff, for which Dr. *M—n* has given no other occaſion, than by attempting to ſhew, from expreſs teſtimonies and inſtances drawn from thoſe Fathers, that their primitive practices and principles tend to confirm the preſent doctrines and worſhip of the Romiſh Church.

This is a pure quæſtion of fact, which has no relation to their virtues or abilities, or any other part of their character, than what is neceſſarily demonſtrated by thoſe ſame inſtances, collected from their works, on which the quæſtion itſelf depends. For example, if, in the courſe of our argument, they are found to affirm, either from their own knowledge or the report of others, things manifeſtly falſe and utterly incredible; what elſe can we poſſibly think, or ſay of them, but that, *if they believed ſuch things, they were groſsly credulous*; *if not*, *were crafty or intereſted, in impoſing the belief of them upon others?* And how ſhining ſoever their abilities may be, this is no calumny, no exaggeration, no torture or fiery trial, but ſuch a treatment of them, as juſtice and reaſon require, and what all writers have ever ſuffered and ought to ſuffer: and whoever forms a judgement of any Author, from any other principle, than what is grounded on the teſtimony of his writings, muſt neceſſarily judge from prejudice or party, or ſome other motive which does not flow from the love of truth.

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[1] Jeſ-Cabal, 42, 43.

The Archdeacon however, though he does not chuſe to give any direct anſwer to thoſe particular facts, which are alledged againſt him from *St. Jerom*, takes no ſmall pains, to clear the antient Fathers in general, from the charge urged againſt them, of being the Authors of thoſe *principal corruptions*, which are practiſed at this day by the Romaniſts, and condemned by the Proteſtants, as *unſcriptural and ſuperſtitious*. Which corruptions he has collected from *the Introductory Diſcourſe* into the eight following articles. 1. *The Inſtitution of Monkery*. 2. *The worſhip of reliques*. 3. *Invocation of Saints*. 4. *Prayers for the dead*. 5. *The ſuperſtitious uſe of Images*. 6. *Of the Sacrament*. 7. *Of the Sign of the Croſs*. 8. *Of conſecrated Oil* [1].

This poor liſt of primitive corruptions, and it's eight articles, our Proteſtant Archdeacon derides, as trifling and impertinent; and of no conſequence at all to us, whether they were practiſed or not, either by the Antient or Modern Church of *Rome*. *Theſe*, ſays he, *are all the great inſtances of agreement, which our Author can find between Popery and Antiquity: and what are theſe? Why, the facts and inſtances, which have been anſwered by Proteſtants over and over* [2]. And to juſtify his contempt of them, he touches here and there the chief of thoſe arguments, which have ſo often been urged in anſwer to them. 1. *That though there are ſeveral paſſages in the Fathers, which ſeem to have a Popiſh caſt, and to look a little Popiſhly affected, yet it may bear a diſpute, as it has often done, whether the caſes on both ſides be ſimilar* [3]. 2. *That it is another quæſtion, whether the Primitive Churches are chargeable, in theſe articles, with any leaven of Romiſh Superſtition at all. Nay, he is ſure, that we may appeal, in theſe very articles, to the practice of the antient Churches, againſt the Church of Rome* [4]. 3. *That the uſages of this kind are really nothing to the*

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[1] Jeſ.Cabal, 28. [2] Ib. [3] Ib. 33, 35, 36. [4] Jeſ-Cabal, 29.

mimickry and fopperies of the later Popiſh rituals [1]. 4. *That the articles here charged upon the Primitive Fathers, are not the principal corruptions of Popery*; *nor in truth any Popery at all, but onely a few trimmings of Popery* [2].

But if Popery, as he contends, was not yet in being, how could the Fathers add *trimmings* to it? Or if his meaning be, that they *trimmed up Chriſtianity into the form and dreſs of Popery*; the onely ſenſe, that his words naturally convey, I ſhall readily agree with him, and cut ſhort the diſpute. But inſtead of allowing any thing, ſo candid or ſenſible; he preſents us with a different picture of Popery, and a genuin liſt of *it's principal corruptions and crying abominations*, as he calls them, and defies any man to ſhew, *that ſo much as one of theſe ever appeared in any Chriſtian Church before A. D.* 440 [3]. Yet ſhould we grant all this, and whatever he can ſay of the ſame kind, to be true, it is nothing to the purpoſe, as the reader will eaſily perceive, by reflecting onely on the genuin nature of Popery, and the real ſtate of our preſent quæſtion.

For it muſt be remembered, that Popery is a ſyſtem, of a very complex and comprehenſive kind, which could not poſſibly be formed at once, or brought to maturity, but by the gradual improvements of ſucceſſive ages. The Primitive Fathers, and eſpecially thoſe of the fourth Century, were the Founders of it; ſketched out the plan, laid a ſure foundation, raiſed a great part of the Fabrick, and left ſufficient funds and materials, for carrying on the reſt to it's full perfection. And we might with as much reaſon deny, that *Romulus*, and the Primitive Kings, who ſucceded him, were the founders of the antient ſtate of *Heathen Rome*, becauſe they did not raiſe it to that heigth of

[1] Ib. 32. [2] Ib. 29, 35. [3] Ib. 27, 28.

power, which it afterwards reached; as that the primitive Fathers were the founders of the preſent ſtate of *Popiſh Rome*, becauſe they left a part of their work to be completed by their Succeſſors. In both caſes, the foundations were ſo effectually laid, and the plan carried ſo far into execution, that the reſt would ſuccede of courſe, if it was not totally deſerted; and from cauſes and principles, of a kind ſomewhat ſimilar. For the Kings of old *Rome*, that they might ſecure their infant ſtate, and enlarge it's dominion, contrived ſuch a ſyſtem of laws and religious rites, as would naturally excite a kind of fanatical zeal and enthuſiaſtic fondneſs for them in the people, whom they trained at the ſame time in ſuch bodily exerciſes, as were proper to confirm both their ſtrength and their courage: by the united force of which principles, the Heathen world became ſubject to the power of that Republic. Thus alſo, the Primitive Fathers, by the invention of certain rites and methods of devotion, with a ſeverity of bodily exerciſes, and peculiar rules of life, which carried a form of ſanctity, and were enforced by a pretence of miracles, infuſed into the multitude a ſpirit of zeal and ſuperſtition, too impetuous to be checked, by the oppoſition of calm reaſon, which gradually ſubjected the Chriſtian world to the dominion of Popiſh *Rome*.

This is a ſhort ſketch of the riſe and progreſs of Popery. It drew it's birth from the primitive ages of the Church; was nurſed by the Fathers of the ſame ages, eſpecially of the fourth Century, and attained gradually to it's preſent maturity, by the help chiefly of thoſe articles, above recited, which were invented for that purpoſe and zealouſly propagated by the ſame Fathers. The Archdeacon however is ſure, *that even in theſe articles, we may appeal to the antient Churches in oppoſition to the Romiſh Church*; and to prove the truth of what he ſays, has taken the pains to ſhew, in every one of them, how far the practice of the primitive Churches was different from the preſent practice of *Rome:* through all which therefore, it will be neceſſary for me, to follow him with a remark or two on each particular article.

The Subſtance, of what he has thought fit to declare, on the ſubject of theſe ſeveral articles, is as follows.——

1. *That there were no Monks in the Church for near three hundred years; and when they were introduced, they were under no Popiſh vows or bonds; nor encroached on the rights of the Biſhops and Clergy; nor held eſtates in mortmain; nor were the creatures and tools of the Popes of Rome.*

The reader will obſerve, that though our diſpute principally turns on *the rites and doctrines of the fourth century,* which the Archdeacon has undertaken to vindicate from a conformity with the preſent Superſtitions of *Rome,* yet in this firſt article of *Monkery,* he owns it to have been introduced even in the third century; with this difference onely, *that it was not yet under any Popiſh vows; nor encroached on the rights of the Biſhops; nor engroſſed eſtates; nor was a tool to the Popes.* Now the fact is this, as it is repreſented by the Fathers themſelves, that towards the end of the fourth century, there was ſuch an amazing increaſe of the Monkiſh Order, through all parts of the Chriſtian world, as makes it reaſonable to believe, that there were greater numbers of Monks in the Church, in proportion to the extent of Chriſtendom at that time, than are to be found in it even at this. Which was wholly owing to the zeal of thoſe Fathers, who made it their buſineſs to recommend and extol the Monaſtic State, as the perfection of a Chriſtian life, and the very pattern of an heavenly one. Theſe Monks lived alſo then, as they do now, in Monaſteries, founded for their ſole uſe and reception, and under a ſolemn profeſſion, or vow of perpetual chaſtity; voluntary, as we may imagine at firſt; till by their frequent violations of it, they were gradually tied down by more ſtrict and forcible reſtraints. And if they did not immediately *encroach on the rights of others, and engroſs eſtates, or become tools of the Popes*; yet ſuch effects were ſure to follow from the very nature of their inſtitution: for it is not poſſible, that ſuch numerous ſocieties of beggarly, crafty, ambitious ſpirits, recommended by a reputation of wonderfull ſanctity, could long ſubſiſt without acquiring both rights and eſtates, and attaching themſelves to that power, which was the beſt able to protect them in ſuch uſurpations. And we find accordingly, that they made it their care, from the very beginning, to ſeduce the heirs of rich families into their Monaſteries, againſt the will, and to the utmoſt grief of their parents, and to conceal them there, from the knowledge and ſearch of their friends. Nor are we to ſuppoſe, that any of their later encroachments are derived from any written ſtatutes or rules, by which modern Monks are governed, in diſtinction from the antient, but from ſuch arts onely, as experience would teach of courſe, and tacitly preſcribe to all ſocieties of the ſame kind.

2. *That there were no invocations of Saints or Angels in the three firſt centuries; and even in the fourth, the addreſſes to them, were more like rhetorical Apoſtrophes (ſuch as that of Dr. M——n to Dr. Woodward) than formal petitions: and no prayers to them were admitted in the public Offices of the Church, before A. D.* 500.

On this article it is allowed by the Archdeacon, that in the fourth century, ſuch Addreſſes were made to Saints and Angels, and ſuch religious honors paid to them, which, within a few generations after, produced a direct worſhip, and *a formule of prayers to them in the common Liturgies of the Church.* But here he has met with a lucky occaſion, as he fancies, of diſtinguiſhtinguiſhing all this away, and giving a ſtroke at the ſame time to Dr. *M——n*, which muſt needs ſtrike him dumb, by ſhewing, that the addreſſes paid to Saints, in the fourth century, were nothing more, than *ſuch rhetorical Apoſtrophes*, as the Dr. himſelf had applied, in a certain latin ſpeech, to his deceaſed friend, *Dr. Woodward.* As if ſuch little attempts of Oratory, or ſallies of fancy, made to enliven a latin oration, in an Aſſembly of Scholars, could bear any analogy, to the religious addreſſes paid to Saints, on bended knees and in a ſupplicant poſture, in Churches dedicated to their names, and before their Altars, and their reliques, according to the manner of that century. But whatever wit or ſmartneſs there may be in the application, it is wholly borrowed from a printed pamphlet, in which the ſame turn is given to the *Saint-worſhip* of thoſe primitive ages.

3. *That the Popiſh worſhip of reliques cannot be found in the Orders of the Church, before the middle of the fourth century: and that it was not made an article of faith, and added to the Apoſtle's Creed, till the time of Pope Pius* IV*th: a preſumption unknown to the Antient Churches.*

Here again we find an identity of practice, in the primitive Church of the fourth century, and the preſent Church of *Rome*, in one of the moſt offenſive and groſſeſt ſuperſtitions of all Popery. Which, though not formally declared to be *an article of faith*, in thoſe antient times, yet was believed as firmly, and had the ſame effect, *as an article of faith*, in all times, or it could not otherwiſe have obtained ſo univerſal an eſtabliſhment. And to ſay the truth, a worſhip confirmed by a perpetual ſucceſſion of miracles, had a juſt claim to be treated as ſuch, in all ages and Churches, where thoſe miracles were believed to be true.

4. *That the ſuperſtitious uſe of Images was never heard of in the primitive times; nor can any one Father of the fourth century be produced to favor it.*

It is certain however, that *Images* were introduced into the Churches, in the fourth century, and, as *St. Auſtin* expreſly declares, found *many adorers of them*, in that age [1]. And in the following ages, it is notorious, that the worſhip of them was practiſed and propagated by all the Fathers. Yet in the fourth century I have met with a ſtory, which ſeems to confute the Archdeacon's peremptory aſſertion, on this article, by the authority of one of the moſt illuſtrious Fathers of that time, even *the great St. Baſil.* The ſtory is this, "that as that vene-"rable Father was fervently praying before *the Image of the* "*bleſſed Virgin*, to which there was annexed alſo a picture of "*St. Mercurius the Martyr*; he received a divine revelation "from the picture of that Saint, by which it was ſignified to "him, that *Julian the Apoſtate*, for whoſe deſtruction he was "then particularly putting up his prayers, was in that very "inſtant of time actually deſtroyed [2]."

5. *That the ſuperſtitious abuſes of the Sacrament of the Euchariſt, which are charged in the Introductory Diſcourſe, on the Fathers of the fourth century, are tales quite foreign to the purpoſe; of mixing the water with the wine, and ſending the conſecrated elements to the abſent, and the like: ſince no Popiſh diſtinction of ſeven Sacraments; no Tranſubſtantiation; adoration of the Hoſt, and propitiatory Sacrifices of the Maſs are brought to light from that quarter.*

Yet beſides thoſe tales, which he calls foreign to the purpoſe, it is ſhewn in the ſame place, though he omits to take notice of it, that ſuch notions and uſages prevailed, in that age, with regard to this Sacrament, as were but very little ſhort of the Popiſh rites and doctrines juſt ſpecified; and within a few ages afterwards actually produced them. For example, this Sacrament was then held to be *a tremendous myſtery, dreadfull even to Angels*; and conſtantly ſtiled *the Sacrifice of the body and blood of Chriſt*, and *offered up as ſuch, both for the dead and the living, over the tombs and aſhes of departed Saints and Martyrs:* which was either the ſame thing, with what is now called the *propitiatory Sacrifice of the Maſs*, or at leaſt a very near approach to it. The conſecrated bread likewiſe, was *locked up in boxes*, and carried about by private Chriſtians, *as a charm, or preſervative againſt all dangers*, and believed to work miracles and *drive Devils out of haunted houſes*; and in ſhort, to perform ſuch aſtoniſhing wonders, that it was not poſſible to take it any longer for mere bread, but ſomething apparently divine and worthy of adoration; and tranſubſtantiated conſequently into the real body of Chriſt, for nothing elſe could naturally flow from theſe principles and practices of the fourth century.

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[1] See Introd. Diſc. p. 21.

[2] Joh. Damaſcen. Op. T. 1. p. 327. E. Edit. Par.

6. *That prayers for the dead were in uſe indeed among the primitive Chriſtians*; *but not ſuch, as the Papiſts now uſe, for the relief of Souls in Purgatory*; *becauſe the doctrine of a Purgatory was not eſtabliſhed till after the fourth century: and the teſtimonies alledged in favor of it, from Tertullian and Origen, were onely the private opinions of thoſe Fathers, not the general doctrine of the Church.*

Here the ſuperſtitious practice of *praying for the dead*, is acknowledged to have been uſed by the Primitive Chriſtians, as it certainly was, from the earlieſt ages, after the days of the Apoſtles. The purpoſe of it, as it is declared by *Tertullian* and *Origen*, was to procure ſome relief and *refreſhment to departed Souls, in an intermediate ſtate of expiatory pains* [1]. And though the Church had not yet publickly avowed the doctrine of ſuch

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[1] Introd. Diſc. 18, 19.

a purgatorial ſtate, yet from the general practice *of praying for the dead*, we may certainly infer a general perſuaſion of it, as the principle, on which the practice itſelf was grounded. Which ſeems even demonſtrable, not onely from the teſtimonies of *Tertullian* and *Origen*, but from the actual eſtabliſhment of *a Purgatory*, which within a ſhort time after was openly avowed, as the doctrine of the Catholic Church. Let the Archdeacon therefore invent what diſtinctions he pleaſes, it will be evident to all men of ſenſe, that *the doctrine of a Purgatory*, with all the lucrative effects, which have ſince been derived from it to the Popiſh Church, was directly founded on the uſages of the fourth century.

7. *That the ill uſes of the Sign of the Croſs, and of oil, were unknown to the Paſtors and offices of the Church for near three hundred years. In baptiſm indeed, and in ſickneſs, they had a ceremony of anointing with oil, and hoped in ſome inſtances for miraculous cures from it; yet theſe and other primitive uſages of the ſame kind were nothing to the mimickry and fopperies of the later Popiſh rituals.*

In theſe two laſt articles, all that he pretends to declare is, that the abuſes of them were unknown to the primitive Church for near three hundred years; whereas his argument required, that they ſhould have continued unknown to the end at leaſt of four hundred. Yet from his own account of them, we may collect, that ſuch abuſes of them were actually introduced within theſe three hundred years, as would neceſſarily create all the reſt. For inſtance, *they anointed ſick perſons with oil*, in the primitive Church, and expected *miraculous cures* from it. They do the very ſame thing at this day in the Romiſh Church, and with the ſame expectation: and in both Churches, miracles are ſaid to be wrought by it, as the ground of that expectation. The onely difference is, *that the Romiſh Church has made a Sacrament* *of this Unction, which the Primitive Church never thought of.* But this is a difference of opinion, not of practice. And if miracles be really wrought by it, I ſee no abſurdity in giving that name to it; and am ſure, that, among the Proteſtants, all thoſe, who draw their religious principles from the ſame ſource of *Primitive Antiquity*, muſt readily allow it to be *a Sacrament*. Then as to *the Sign of the Croſs*, it is affirmed likewiſe to have wrought many great miracles, in the fourth century; *to have driven away Devils every where before it*; *to have thrown open gates, which were ſhut againſt it*; *to have been imprinted miraculouſly on people's garments. And though the Archdeacon would perſuade us, that uſages of thoſe times were nothing, to the mimickry and fopperies of the later Popiſh rituals*; yet on the contrary, it is reaſonable to believe, as well from the nature of the thing, as the teſtimonies of the Fathers themſelves, that with regard to this article of *the Croſs*, *the fopperies of the Romiſh Church* are much leſs extravagant, than thoſe of the primitive ages; when it's miracles were freſh, and it's devotion ran high; and when every Chriſtian, as *Tertullian* ſays, was poſſeſſed with ſuch ſuperſtitious notions about it, that he could not take a ſingle ſtep, even in private and domeſtic life; *could not go out of his houſe, or come in*; *put on his cloaths, or his ſhoes*; *could not bathe, eat, light up a candle*; *go to bed, or ſit down*; *till he had firſt marked his forehead with the ſign of the Croſs* [1].

Thus we ſee at laſt, how every thing, which is aſſerted, in *the Introductory Diſcourſe*, on the ſubject of theſe Articles, is confirmed by the Archdeacon's own account of them. It is declared in that *Diſcourſe*, *that, in the third, fourth, and fifth centuries, all thoſe ſeveral corruptions, were either actually introduced, or the ſeeds of them ſo effectually ſown, that they could not fail of pro-*

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[1] Ib. 19, 20.

ducing the fruits, which we now ſee in the Romiſh Church. And nothing could more directly illuſtrate the truth of it, than what he himſelf has here offered in contradiction to it. He tells us, that this or that article was unknown to the third century, yet allows it at the ſame time to have been common in the fourth; or if unknown ſtill to the fourth, that it was practiſed in the fifth: or if it had not reached it's full maturity in any of thoſe ages, yet from the ſeeds of it then ſown, it became ripe and floriſhing within a ſhort time after. Which is the whole that Dr. *M——n* can be reaſonably underſtood to mean, when he charges the preſent corruptions of *Rome*, to the principles and practices of the Primitive Fathers.

But in the article of *Reliques*, the Archdeacon has introduced a very remarkable teſtimony, which I omitted to take notice of in that place, becauſe it ſeemed to require a more particular conſideration: I mean the authority there alledged by him of *a late Great Prelate, Archbiſhop Wake, who did not ſcruple,* he ſays, *to declare, that as to the honors, due to the genuin reliques of the Martyrs or Apoſtles, no Proteſtant would ever refuſe whatever the primitive Churches paid to them* [1]. I did not think it ſtrange, that what an Archbiſhop had not ſcrupled to declare, an Archbiſhop's Chaplain ſhould not ſcruple to defend, yet could not help wiſhing, that they had both of them been more ſcrupulous in the preſent caſe: becauſe I take it to be evident, as well from the dictates of reaſon as of religion, that how *genuin ſoever the reliques of the Martyrs or Apoſtles* may be, or whatever honors may have been paid to them by the primitive Church, no honors at all can be due to them from any Chriſtian, out of any other principle, than of mere policy, or ſuperſtition: the truth of which I ſhall endeavour to illuſtrate, by ſketching out a brief account of the riſe and progreſs of *relique-worſhip* from the earlieſt ages of the Church.

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[1] Jeſ. Cab. 29, 30.

Within a ſhort time after the death of Chriſt, *St. Stephen*, one of the moſt eminent of the firſt diſciples, became the *firſt Martyr* of the Chriſtian Church. He was condemned to die by the great Council of the Jews, *and ſtoned to death accordingly*; and after his execution, *was carried to his burial by devout men, who made great lamentation over him* [1]. This is the ſumm of what we read in the Goſpel, on the ſubject of his Martyrdom; in which *his blood is ſaid to have been ſhed,* yet no care taken, to preſerve the leaſt drop of it, or any fragment of his ſkull, or bones, or cloaths, which might probably have been broken or rent by the violence of ſuch a death. The piety of thoſe *devout men*, who carried him to his grave, reached no farther in thoſe days, than to the natural and neceſſary office of giving him a decent burial, and lamenting the cruel and undeſerved fate of ſo excellent a perſon, and zealous champion of the Chriſtian faith: Nor do we read any where, of an *anniverſary Feſtival* appointed after his death, and celebrated afterwards at his Tomb, by the Apoſtles, or their Succeſſors, *on the day of his Martyrdom*.

Thus the body of this great and firſt of the Chriſtian Martyrs reſted in it's grave, undiſturbed, unknown, and unheard of, for about three hundred years; when it is ſaid to have been diſcovered, *by a revelation from heaven*, in the fourth century: an age, in which the devotion of the Church was principally turned towards *the reliques of it's Martyrs*. The fame of this miraculous diſcovery was ſoon ſpread through the Chriſtian world by the Pilgrims, who viſited *Jeruſalem*; whence they brought away ſome little portions of *the reliques* of this Saint; for the reception of which, ſeveral *Chappels or Oratories* were built in different countries, which, according to the cuſtom of thoſe days, were called *the Memories of* thoſe particular Martyrs, whoſe reliques were depoſited in them. Some of this kind were built for *the reliques of St. Stephen* in *Africa*; where they are affirmed to have wrought dayly miracles, of the moſt amazing and illuſtrious kind; ſeveral of which are particularly recorded and atteſted by *St. Auſtin*, from his own knowledge [1]: whoſe authority, with that of the other Fathers, who relate much the ſame ſtories, of *other reliques* and *other miracles* wrought by them in different countries, is the very pattern, as well as the ſupport of the preſent *relique-worſhip* in the Church of *Rome*. If therefore the authority of a late Archbiſhop, now enforced by our Archdeacon, ſhould induce us, to pay the *ſame honors to the bones of Martyrs, which were paid to them by the primitive Church*, it would plunge us at once into the very depths of Popery.

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[1] Acts viii. 2, 22, 20.

But it may be ſaid perhaps, that tho' the Archdeacon's argument neceſſarily includes *the fourth Century*, within the notion of the primitive Church, yet the Archbiſhop's declaration muſt not be underſtood, to have reached ſo far, but be reſtrained to the earlier ages onely, which ſucceded immediately to that of the Apoſtles. Let us inquire then, how far this limitation will juſtify it, and what honors were paid, even by the earlieſt Churches, to the reliques of their Martyrs. We have already ſeen, how, in the days of the Apoſtles, there does not appear to have been the leaſt care or thought, about preſerving any *reliques of the firſt Martyr Stephen*; nor after the rites of burial, any honors paid to him, but what are paid of courſe, to every virtuous and excellent man, by a pious and affectionate remembrance of his name and ſufferings. Yet in the very next age, and within a few years after the death of *St. John*, the laſt of the Apoſtles, the devotion of the Church began to take a ſuperſtitious turn, in this very article: as we may collect from the antient narratives of the Martyrdoms of two, the moſt celebrated Diſciples of that Apoſtle, *Ignatius and Polycarp*, which were written at the time of their execution, and by perſons who attended it.

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[1] De Civ. D. l. 22. c. 8. §. 20, 11.

Ignatius, then Biſhop of *Antioch*, was expoſed to the wild beaſts, in the Amphitheater at *Rome*; on which occaſion, it was his earneſt prayer to God, *that the beaſts might devour his body ſo intirely, that no remains of it ſhould be left, to give his friends the trouble of gathering them.* And he obtained his wiſh ſo far, as the narrative informs us, *that none but the greater and harder of his holy bones remained*; yet theſe were gathered up, and carried to *Antioch*, and there *wrapped up in linnen, as an ineſtimable treaſure, left to the Church, by the grace, which was in the Martyr* [1].

In the relation alſo of the Martyrdom of *Polycarp*, who was burnt alive, ſome years after, at *Smyrna*, it is ſaid: " that his " friends gathered up his bones, *more precious than the richeſt " jewels, and tried above gold*, and depoſited them in a proper " place, where they propoſed to aſſemble themſelves together, " as oft as the Lord would give them opportunity, to celebrate " *the birth day of his Martyrdom* [2],"

Such were the beginnings of the honors, paid *to the reliques of the Martyrs*, ſoon after the days of the Apoſtles: which ſuperſtition continued gradually to increaſe, in proportion as the Church itſelf increaſed in ſtrength and numbers, till it reached it's full heigth upon the converſion of the Roman Empire; when the whole Chriſtian world ſeemed to be running mad, as it were, with an enthuſiaſtic zeal for the reliques of Saints; urged on and inflamed by the authority and eloquence of all the principal Fathers of that age. Thus *Chryſoſtom*, haranguing on the praiſes of *St. Ignatius*, to the people of *Antioch*, with whom his reliques were depoſited; " God, ſays he, took him from you for a ſhort " time, but reſtored him with greater glory: and as thoſe, " who borrow money, pay it back again with intereſt, ſo God, " after he had borrowed this pretious treaſure of you for a little " while, and ſhewn it to the City of *Rome*, ſent it back again " with the greater luſter. You ſent him out a Biſhop, but re- " ceived him a Martyr: You ſent him out with your prayers, " but received him with crowns. And not onely you, but all " the Cities on the road: for how were they all affected, think " you, to ſee his reliques brought back? What pleaſure, what " exultation of joy did they expreſs? What acclamations of " praiſe did they ſend forth from all ſides on the crowned " Martyr?" [1] And about the end of the fourth century, as *Euagrius* relates, " the Emperor *Theodoſius* was moved by a ſug- " geſtion from God, to do ſome greater honors to this Martyr, " by tranſlating his bones with great pomp and ſolemn proceſ- " ſion, from the place, where they were firſt depoſited, without " the City, into a temple within it, which was conſecrated on " that occaſion to the memory of *St. Ignatius:* whoſe annual " Feſtival was rendered ſtill more ſplendid and magnificent by " *Gregory*, Biſhop of that City [2].

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[1] See Relation of the Martyrdom of St. Ignat. tranſlated into Engliſh by Archbiſhop Wake, §. 12.

[2] See ditt. of St. Polycarp, §. 18.

Here then we ſee, what was the practice of the primitive Church, with reſpect *to reliques*, from the earlieſt ages. And after this view of it, if we ſhould beg our Archdeacon, to inform us a little more preciſely, what part a Proteſtant ought to act in this caſe; whether with the firſt Chriſtians, in the days of the Apoſtles, he ought to obſerve *a perfect indifference or neutrality about them,* neither honoring nor inſulting them; or with the firſt Chriſtians, after the Apoſtles, *gather them with a religious care*; *wrap them up in ſilk, or fine linnen, depoſit them in ſacred places: treat them as the moſt precious jewels, and ineſtimable treaſures of the Chriſtian Church*; he would ſtick, I dare ſay, to his text; exhort us to follow the example of the primitive Churches; and chearfully to perform, what the authority of thoſe pureſt ages had ſanctified: nor would he have any ſcruple, about puſhing our zeal too far; for he, who to the diſgrace of Proteſtantiſm, has ſtrenuouſly defended the groſſeſt ſuperſtitions, and moſt deſpicable impoſtures of the fifth century, cannot poſſibly be ſcandaliſed by the leſs obnoxious practices of the fourth.

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[1] Oper. Tom. 2. p. 600. Edit. Benedict.

[1] Lib. 1. c. 16.

I cannot conclude theſe remarks, without reminding the reader once more, that the reaſon of my appealing ſingly to *St. Jerom,* was, not to gain any particular advantage to my argument, by ſelecting a character the moſt liable to exception; but on the contrary, to ſhorten the diſpute, by offering one of the beſt and moſt valued characters of all the Antient Fathers, as a pattern or teſt, by which the merits of the reſt ſhall be determined. For if a perſon of his ſuperior parts and learning, diſtinguiſhed by the ſeverity of his life, as well as his piety, and zeal for the honor of the Goſpel, could either be impoſed upon himſelf by forged miracles, or knowingly impoſe them upon others, for the ſake of recommending thoſe ſuperſtitious rites, which are now practiſed by the Church *of Rome,* we need not look any farther; the ſame charge will eaſily be admitted; as it may more eaſily be proved againſt the reſt. For which reaſon, I ſhall here add one ſhort ſtory more, from our own hiſtory, which occurs now to my memory, and may ſerve as a freſh illuſtration, of what I have before affirmed, concerning the nature and effect of his writings and principles.

At the time of the Reformation, *Dr. John Storie*, an eminent Civilian, and bigotted Papiſt, who, in *Queen Mary*'s reign, had been a chief inſtrument of *Bp. Bonner*'s butcheries of the Proteſtants, fled into *Flanders* upon the acceſſion of *Q. Elizabeth*; where he was ſeized by ſtratagem, and brought a Priſoner into *England*, and executed afterwards at *Tyburn*, for the conſpiracies and invaſions of this kingdom, which he had been projecting and ſolliciting abroad: and being admoniſhed at the time of his execution, to declare ſomewhat concerning his religion, he choſe to ſay nothing more, than that he *died in the faith of St. Jerom*. This he took to be a ſufficient declaration of it; and for this, he has ever ſince been conſidered *as a Saint and Martyr* at *Rome*; where his martyrdom was printed, and repreſented in the Engliſh College of that City [2]. But if *Jerom* after all, as the Archdeacon tells us, be really *on the Proteſtant ſide*, and *a grievous thorn in the ſides of the Papiſts*, it is incumbent on him, to correct the miſtake of our Hiſtorians, as well as the inſolence of the Romaniſts, and to do juſtice to the memory of this celebrated Dr, by reclaming him, as a Martyr of our own Church, and as true a Proteſtant as himſelf; having ſacrificed his life in the defence of that *pure and primitive Chriſtianity*, which he is now ſo zealouſly recommending.

But the Archdeacon, as we find, will not be provoked to give an anſwer to any facts, which relate to *St. Jerom:* all, which he has thought fit to ſay to them, amounts to little more than this; " *that Jerom* was a wonderfull ſcholar and fine writer,
" and tho' he had ſome blemiſhes and peccancies, yet they were
" too trifling to want any apology: and for his own part, that

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[1] See Strype's Annals of Queen Elizabeth, Vol. I. p. 522.

" he highly eſteems thoſe primitive teachers and defenders of " Chriſtianity, whoſe works he has read with attention, in order to *judge fairly and accurately* of Chriſtian antiquities, by " the lights which he received from them: and that a modern " ſcholar, who ſhould ſcorn to accept their aſſiſtance, would " make but a *ſorry kind of figure* in the republic of letters [1].

How *fairly and accurately his attentive ſtudy of the Fathers* has taught him *to judge of Chriſtian antiquities,* the reader will eaſily perceive, from the concluſion, which he has drawn from it, to the great comfort of Proteſtants; that *all thoſe primitive Saints in general, and St. Jerom in particular, are an armoury on our ſide, perpetually galling the Papiſts, in ſome tender point, and expoſing to every common eye the unſcriptural and unprimitive crudities of their principles and practices* [2]. And how uſefull alſo the *ſame ſtudy* is, in qualifying a man, *to make a figure in the world,* is evident likewiſe, from the great fame and honors, which this ſame Archdeacon has raiſed to himſelf on that ſole foundation.

If this then be the caſe, and if ſuch advantages really flow from the ſtudy of thoſe Antients, the Papiſts have great reaſon to expoſtulate with him, for the injuſtice offered to their religion, by the very Title of his *Charge*; *Popery the bane of true letters.* For whatever we have to ſay againſt Popery, it is notorious, that it is more immediately connected with *the ſtudy of the Fathers,* and has done much more towards promoting it in the Chriſtian world, than Proteſtantiſm: and that one ſingle Order of Monks has publiſhed more beautifull, correct and uſefull editions of their works, than all the Proteſtant countries together have ever done: ſo that by his own principles, Popery, inſtead of being called the *bane,* ought to be called, the *baſis of true letters;* or the onely ſchool,

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[1] See Def. p. 36, 40, 41, 42.

[2] See Charg. p. 2.

whoſe ſcholars are rightly qualified, *to make a figure in the republic of letters.*

But this character of Popery, as it is ſignified by his Title, is not a contradiction onely to his own principles, but what is ſtill worſe, ſeems contrary likewiſe to truth, and the experience of thoſe, who have viſited Popiſh countries; in many of which, the liberal arts and ſciences are known to floriſh in an eminent degree; and their Cities to abound with noble and uſefull libraries, open and acceſſible to all, while the richeſt and largeſt of all Proteſtant Cities is ſhamefully deſtitute of them. When we write therefore againſt Popery, let us be ſo candid, as to give it it's due; for when we have ſo much truth on our ſide, it is a ſhame to recur to lies: we may call *it's doctrines, abſurd*; *it's rites, paganiſh*; *it's worſhip, idolatrous*; we may call it, *a ſyſtem of craft and policy,* contrived to enſlave the Chriſtian world to the dominion of *the Romiſh Church:* but when we aſcribe to it what is falſe, we expoſe ourſelves to the juſt contempt of the Romaniſts themſelves, and inſtead of diſcrediting their religion, give them a bad ſpecimen of our own.

A

VINDICATION

OF THE

FREE INQUIRY

INTO THE

MIRACULOUS POWERS,

Which are ſuppoſed

To have ſubſiſted in the CHRISTIAN CHURCH, *&c.*

From the OBJECTIONS of

Dr. *DODWELL* and Dr. *CHURCH.*

A
VINDICATION
OF THE
FREE INQUIRY, &c.

DR. *Dodwell* takes occaſion to acquaint us, in his Preface, *that his performance was not intended for the public view, but the peruſal onely of a private friend; till being communicated to ſeveral others, whoſe judgement he had great reaſon to value, it was committed to the preſs by the unanimous advice of them all.* Dr. *Church* alſo, after the example of his partner, could not deny himſelf the pleaſure of declaring; that *he likewiſe had the honor of receiving the approbation of ſome eminent, learned and judicious perſons, who had taken the trouble of reviſing his papers, and adviſed him to offer them to the public.* This method of puffing their works *a priori*, ſo flattering to the generality of our writers, is a ſort of pride, which I cannot aſſume to myſelf; who have no man's judgement to truſt to, but my own; no *Clerical Synod* to call around me; no *Epiſcopal Oracle* to conſult. I am acquainted indeed with many of the Clergy, whom I highly eſteem; and whoſe advice might be uſefull to me on ſeveral occaſions; if the ſubjects, which I have choſen to defend, did not forbid me to ſeek it: for their ſakes, I mean not for my own; leſt the ſuſpicion of any communication with me, might hurt their fame or fortunes, and expoſe them to the ſame envy, which I myſelf have incurred. For heterodox opinions in the Church, like treaſonable words in the State, impart a guilt even to the hearer, and make him an accomplice in the crime, unleſs he purge himſelf by a diſcovery, and impeachment of the author.

But to return to our Doctors; it is certainly a mere impertinence, to talk of the approbation given to their books, before they had paſſed through the preſs, ſince their merit can onely be aſcertained by the ſucceſs of that paſſage, and the reception, which they may afterwards find, not from a cabal of private friends, but from the general voice, and judgement of men of ſenſe; unprejudiced, and unbiaſſed with regard to the point in diſpute. And here again, I muſt own, theſe Doctors have received an honor, which I can never hope to obtain, from the public teſtimonial of a great and famous Univerſity, to whoſe judgement I have ever been diſpoſed to pay the higheſt regard. On this indeed, they have great reaſon to plume themſelves; but would have had much greater, if that learned Body could ſtamp the truth of opinions by the ſame ſeal, with which it ſtamps diploma's, and confers honors on the Authors of them. For in the preſent caſe, it has fallen out very unluckily both to thoſe, who conferred theſe honors, and to thoſe alſo, who now wear them; that even before the collation of them, one of the very books, on the account of which they were given, was effectually confuted, and, in every article relating to the main queſtion, ſhewn to be wholly trifling and impertinent; and incapable of adding the leaſt advantage to the cauſe which it defends, or of doing the leaſt hurt to that which it had undertaken to overthrow. And the confutation of either of the two Doctors may be applied very juſtly to them both: for in the more bulky volume of the Second, we find nothing more than ſome little enlargement of the ſame arguments and objections, the ſame cavils and evaſions, which we meet with in the Firſt.

Now theſe, I ſay, are ſubſtantially confuted by Mr. *Toll*; a Clergyman of *Hampſhire*, bred, I ſuppoſe, in the ſame Univerſity; and who would have been a credit to any, though not yet honored with any *Diploma*, nor likely to reap any other reward for his pains, than what an honeſt mind and honeſt fame will be ſure to give to his diſintereſted defence, of what he takes to be true, in an Inquiry of no ſmall importance to the Chriſtian Church.

I ſhould have been glad therefore, for the ſake of the Univerſity, which will ever engage my good wiſhes, that the zeal, which it has expreſſed on this occaſion, for the primitive Fathers, and their miracles, had been a little more patient, and not hurried it on, to crown it's champions before the victory; and by giving it's ſanction to opinions ſtill in diſpute, to make itſelf a party in a controverſy; which may poſſibly end, as many have done, to the mortification of thoſe, who have ventured to give judgement in it, before both ſides have been heard.

Theſe Doctors begin with an examination of my Preface; wherein I had laid down a few general principles, which might be of uſe, as I imagined, to prepare the reader to form a right judgement on the ſubject of the *Free Inquiry*. But here, they meet with many paſſages, which greatly offend and puzzle them; ſome as carrying a ſuſpicious meaning; others, a dangerous one; and others as wholly unintelligible, and having no meaning at all [1]. Yet theſe paſſages, as they own, have no relation to the queſtion in diſpute; and the ſole uſe which they make of them, is, to give them an invidious turn, and charge them with pernicious tendencies, in order to prepoſſeſs the reader with an odious opinion of my character and principles, and, by conſequence, a favorable one of the zeal and piety in expoſing them, and to warn all good Chriſtians of that poyſon, which I was covertly intending to infuſe. Yet the meaning of theſe very places will appear, I dare ſay, to every candid reader, to be both clear, and inoffenſive; cloathed with no affected obſcurity, nor carrying any other ſenſe, than what I ſhall ever be ready to avow and openly defend.

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[1] *Dod.* 5, 13, 15. *Ch.* Pref. vii. 17.

For inſtance; I have ſaid, that this queſtion concerning the miraculous powers of the Church, depends on the joint credibility of the facts, pretended to have been produced by thoſe powers, and of the witneſſes, who atteſt them. Then, after ſome reaſons given, why the credibility of facts ought generally to have more weight with us, than the credibility of witneſſes, I conclude the paragraph in theſe words; "The teſtimony therefore of facts, as it is offered to our ſenſes, in this wonderfull fabric and conſtitution of worldly things, may properly be called the teſtimony of God himſelf: as it carries with it the ſureſt inſtruction in all caſes, and to all nations, which in the ordinary courſe of his providence, he has thought fit to appoint for the guidance of human life [1].

There is another paſſage or two of a ſimilar kind, and of equal offence to theſe Doctors, in which, after cenſuring the raſhneſs of forming peremptory arguments, as my adverſaries are apt to do, upon the ſuppoſed neceſſity or propriety of a divine interpoſition, in this or that particular caſe, I add; "that the whole, which the wit of man can poſſibly diſcover, either of the ways or will of the Creator, muſt be acquired by a contrary method; not by imagining vainly within ourſelves, what may be proper or improper for him to do, but by looking abroad, and contemplating what he has actually done,

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[1] *Free Inq.* Pref. p. 10.

" and attending ſeriouſly to that revelation, which he has " made of himſelf from the beginning, and placed continu- " ally before our eyes, in the wonderfull works and beautifull " fabric of this viſible world [1]." Again, in conformity with this principle, I obſerve, " how fallacious the judgement even of " the wiſeſt men has been, and ever will be, when deſerting " this path of nature and experience, aed giving the reins to " fancy and conjecture, they attempt to illuſtrate the ſecret " councils of Providence [2]."

Theſe are the paſſages which chiefly offend them, they declare them to be crude, unguarded, alarming expreſſions, big with dangerous inſinuations, inconſiſtent with my own conceſſions, that they prove too much, and ſeem to aſſert the impoſſibility of all miracles; ſo as to have made one of my Anſwerers believe, and all the reſt of them ſuſpect me, to be a Deiſt, nay that it cannot be excuſed from open Deiſm, from which therefore I ought to purge myſelf [3]. Since I am called upon then ſo ſolemnly, to explane myſelf on the ſubject of theſe paſſages, I ſhall take this occaſion to open them a little more particularly, and declare my real view in them, tho' perſuaded at the ſame time, that no explication of them can be wanted by any diſintereſted reader, as well as that none, which I ſhall give, will ever ſatisfy theſe Doctors, who now demand it.

One of them appears to be ſcandaliſed, by the title of *Revelation*, which I have given, to that diſcovery, which God made of himſelf in the viſible works of his creation. Yet it is no other, than what the wiſe in all ages have given to it: who conſider it as the moſt authentic and indiſputable revelation, which God has ever given of himſelf from the beginning of the world to this day. It was this, by which the firſt notice of him was reveled to the inhabitants of the earth; and by which alone it has been kept up ever ſince, among the ſeveral nations of it. From this the reaſon of man was inabled, to trace out his nature and attributes, and by a gradual deduction of conſequences to learn his own nature alſo, with all the duties belonging to it, which relate either to God, or his Fellow creatures. This conſtitution of things was ordained by God as an univerſal Law or rule of conduct to man; the ſource of all his knowledge; the teſt of all truth: by which all ſubſequent revelations, which are ſuppoſed to have been given by God in any other manner, muſt be tried and cannot be received as divine, any farther than as they are found to tally and coincide with this original ſtandard.

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[1] *Free Inq.* Pref. p. 22. *Ch.* p. 75. [2] *Free Inq.* Pref. p. 20. [3] *Ch.* vii. 17, 65.

It was this divine law, which I referred to, in the paſſages above recited, being deſirous, to excite the reader's attention to it, as it would inable him to judge the more clearly and freely of the argument, which I was handling. For by contemplating this law, he would diſcover the genuin way, which God himſelf has marked out to us for the acquiſition of true knowledge, not from the authority, or the reports of our fellow creatures, but from the information of the facts, and material objects, which, in his providential diſtribution of worldly things, he hath preſented to the perpetual obſervation of our ſenſes. For as it was from theſe, that his exiſtence and nature, the moſt important articles of all knowledge, were firſt diſcovered to man, ſo, that grand diſcovery furniſhed new light towards tracing out the reſt, and made all the inferior ſubjects of human knowledge the more eaſily diſcoverable to us by the ſame method.

I had another view likewiſe in the ſame paſſages, and applicable to the ſame end, of giving the reader a more inlarged notion of the queſtion in diſpute, who, by turning his thoughts to reflect on the works of the Creator, as they are manifeſted to us in this fabric of the world, could not fail to obſerve, that they were all of them great, noble, and ſuitable to the majeſty of his nature; carrying with them the proofs of their origin, and ſhewing themſelves to be the productions of an allwiſe and allmighty Being: and by accuſtominghis mind to theſe ſublime reflections, he will be prepared to determine, whether thoſe miraculous interpoſitions, ſo confidently affirmed to us by the Primitive Fathers, can reaſonably be thought to make a part in the grand ſcheme of the divine adminiſtration; or whether it be agreeable, that God, who created all things by his will, and can give what turn to them he pleaſes by the ſame will; ſhould, for the particular purpoſes of his Government and the ſervice of the Church, deſcend to the low expedient of viſions, and revelations; granted ſometimes to boys, for the inſtruction of the Elders, and ſometimes to women, to ſettle the faſhion and length of their veils, and ſometimes alſo to the Paſtors of the Church, to injoin them to ordain one man a lecturer, another a Prieſt; or that he ſhould ſcatter a profuſion of miracles around the ſtake of a Martyr; yet all of them vain and inſignificant, and without the leaſt ſenſible effect, either of preſerving the life, or eaſing the ſufferings of the Saint; or even of mortifying his perſecutors, who were always left to enjoy the full triumph of their cruelty, and the poor Martyr to expire by a miſerable death. When theſe facts, I ſay, are brought to the original teſt, and compared with the genuin and indiſputable works of the Creator; how minute, how trifling, how contemptible muſt they appear? and how incredible muſt it be thought, that, for the inſtruction of his Church, God ſhould employ miniſters ſo precarious, unſatisfactory, and inadequate; *as the extaſies of women and boys, and the viſions of intereſted Prieſts*; which were derided at the very time by men of ſenſe, to whom they were propoſed.

That this univerſal law was actually reveled to the Heathen world, long before the Goſpel was known to it, we learn from all the principal ſages of antiquity, who made it the capital ſubject of their ſtudies and writings. *Cicero* has given us a ſhort abſtract of it, in a fragment ſtill remaining from one of his books on Government, which I ſhall here tranſcribe in his own words, as they will illuſtrate my ſenſe alſo, in the exceptionable paſſages abovementioned, which appears ſo dark and ſo dangerous to my Antagoniſts.

Cicero's Law of God.

" The true law, ſays he, is right reaſon, conformable to " the nature of things; conſtant, eternal, diffuſed through all; " which calls us to duty, by commanding, deterrs us from ſin, " by forbidding; which never loſes it's influence with the good; " nor ever preſerves it with the wicked. This law cannot " poſſibly be over-ruled by any other; nor abrogated in the " whole or in part: nor can we be abſolved from it, either by " the Senate, or the people: nor are we to ſeek any other com- " ment, or interpreter of it, but itſelf: nor can there be " one law at *Rome*, another at *Athens*; one now, another " hereafter; but the ſame eternal, immutable law comprehends " all nations, at all times, under one common Maſter and " Governor of all, God. He is the inventor, propoundor, " enactor of this law: and who ſoever will not obey it, muſt " firſt renounce himſelf and throw off the nature of man: by " doing which, he will ſuffer the greateſt puniſhment, tho' " he ſhould eſcape all the other torments, which are commonly " believed to be prepared for the wicked [ ].

Our Doctors, perhaps will look with horror on all this, as rank Deiſm; but let them call it what they pleaſe, I ſhall ever avow and defend it, as the fundamental, eſſential and vital part of all true religion, and what the Goſpel itſelf muſt adopt, as it's beſt foundation and ſupport. The fragment was preſerved to us by *Lactantius*, who lived in the third Century, and was the beſt Chriſtian writer of his age; who, after the recital of it in his works, makes this reflection upon it; "what man, tho' already acquainted with the myſteries of "God, could ſet forth the law of God with ſuch force as this? "who yet was far removed from the knowledge of the truth. "For my part, I look upon thoſe, who utter ſuch truths "without knowing them, as perſons inſpired by a divine "Spirit. But as he clearly ſaw the force and the ground of "the holy law, ſo, if he had known or could have explaned "it's precepts alſo, he would then have performed the part, "not of a Philoſopher, but of a Prophet [1]." Here we ſee a Chriſtian writer, who lived in the third Century, frankly acknowledging this law, as it is explaned by *Cicero*, *to be the law of God*; and which our knowledge, even of the myſteries of God, as propounded to us by the Goſpel, could not inable us to illuſtrate with ſuch force, as the improved reaſon of this great and virtuous man: which correſponds alſo with what *Cicero* has elſewhere declared of the ſame *law, that it was the mind of God, governing all things by eternal reaſon*; *whoſe ſubſtitute or interpretor on earth was the reaſon and mind of the wiſe* [2].

Lactantius

inspired

This is all the explication which I can give, towards healing the ſcruples of thoſe, who are offended with the paſſages above mentioned, how far it may ſatisfy our Doctors, I neither know nor care: for tho' it will ever be my deſire to give all ſatisfaction to every candid and liberal inquirer, yet in the preſent controverſy, theſe Anſwerers have ſhewn, that they came with no view of inquiring freely and philoſophically, what was true, but to defend with all their ſkill, what their prepoſſeſſions and ambitious views made them reſolve to ſupport at any rate, in defiance of all the light and conviction which could poſſibly be offered on the contrary ſide. This will clearly appear to all men of ſenſe and candor from the general turn and ſpirit of their performances, and from their futile, evaſive and illiberal manner of treating the moſt important arguments of the *Free Inquiry*; which I ſhall now therefore procede to examine; without troubling the reader with any more of their prefatory objections, which are all chiefly of the ſame kind; not relating to the main quæſtion, but cavilling onely on ſome incidental points, of little or no moment to it, in order to draw ſomething out of them, that by tainting the credit of the Author with the weaker part of their readers, may infuſe a general diſtruſt of his argument.

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[1] D. Juſ. vi. viii.

[2] Leg. 2. 4.

Let us enter then into the Free Inquiry; where the firſt argument which I made uſe of towards confirming my general poſition, is the ſilence of the Apoſtolic Fathers, with regard to any ſtanding power of working miracles, as reſiding ſtill in that age for the converſion of the Heathen world. This ſilence is frankly allowed by the firſt of my Antagoniſts, Mr. *Jackſon*, who inſiſts however and endeavours to ſhew, that the inference, which I draw from it, is vain and groundleſs. Theſe Doctors however, more ſtout than their Leader, and reſolving to diſpute every inch of ground with me, utterly deny the fact of their ſilence, and affirm; that tho' they do not indeed inlarge on their miraculous powers, nor make any direct appeal to them as their ſucceſſors do, yet that many occaſional hints and plain references to them are to be found in their writings.

The principal inſtance, which they produce in proof of this aſſertion, is from the Epiſtle of St. *Clemens to the Corinthians*; which, as it is paraphraſed by *Archbiſhop Wake*, does expreſly aſſert the ſubſiſtence of miraculous powers to that particular age. And upon the authority of this paraphraſe, of which I had not taken any notice, they preſently reproach me, with the willfull ſuppreſſion of a teſtimony, which directly overthrows my argument, and to which I had not attempted to give any anſwer [1]. And here indeed I muſt confeſs, that the paſſage, as explaned by the Archbiſhop, is full to their purpoſe, and contrary to my own, yet knowing it to be ſuch, that I willfully omitted it. But I can plead at the ſame time, with great truth, that the reaſons, which moved me to omit it, were, firſt, the utter inſignificancy, which it appeared to have, as to any proof or evidence, relating to this quæſtion, and ſecondly, a regard alſo for the character of that venerable Prelate, which made me unwilling to recall into public light, a paraphraſe, which I took to be unworthy of him, and of all others that I had ever obſerved, to be the moſt palpably forced and dreſſed up, without any ground or color from the text, to ſerve the point, which he was inculcating, concerning the continuance of the miraculous powers to the times of theſe Apoſtolic Fathers.

The Words of the Text, as they ſtand in the Epiſtle clear of the paraphraſe, and tranſlated by the Archbiſhop himſelf, are theſe, "Let a man be faithfull; let him be powerfull in "the utterance of knowledge; let him be wiſe in making an Wakes translation

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[1] D. 27, 28. Ch. 94, 5.

" exact judgement of words; let him be pure in all his actions: " but ſtill, by how much the more he ſeems to be above others, " by reaſon of theſe things, by ſo much the more will it behove " him, to be humble-minded, and to ſeek what is profitable to " all men, not his own advantage [1]."

Thus ſtands the paſſage in the Archbiſhop's Engliſh Edition of the Epiſtles of theſe Apoſtolic Fathers; where no man, whoſe mind was not prepoſſeſſed with the ſame hypotheſis, or ſenſes dazzled with the authority [2] of the Archbiſhop, could find a ſyllable, which bears any ſort of reference to miraculous powers, or ſuggeſts the leaſt hint of the continuance of them to that age [3]. How is it then, that the Archbiſhop has contrived to give ſuch a turn to it? why, not by any critical art, or grammatical rule, but by forcibly thruſting his own ſenſe into it; in a manner ſo groſs and arbitrary, as would fix the ſame ſenſe, or any other upon any paſſage whatſoever. We ſee, that the words of the text unparaphraſed, are clear of any miraculous ſenſe; for in his Preliminary Diſcourſe to theſe very Epiſtles, he has ſhewn us, how eaſily this may be performed on any proper occaſion, by the help of a commodious paraphraſe.

The paſſage then, when opened and illuſtrated by the Archbiſhop's explanatory tranſlation, ſtands thus;

Wake's Paraphrase

" Let a man have faith; that is, *ſays the Archbiſhop*, ſuch a " faith, by which he is able to work miracles: let him be " powerfull to utter knowledge; that is, myſtical knowledge, " *ſays the Archbiſhop*, for to that the expreſſion manifeſtly re- " lates: let him be wiſe in diſcerning of ſpeeches; for that " was another gift, *ſays the Archbiſhop*, common to thoſe times: " let him be pure in his actions: but ſtill, by how much the

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[1] Wake's Ep. S. 48. [2] Ch. 104. [3] T. 19.

" more he ſeems to excell others, that is, *ſays the Archbiſhop*, " upon the account of theſe extraordinary endowments; by " ſo much the more will it behove him to be humble-minded [1]."

The recital of this paraphraſe will readily convince every man of ſenſe, that I could have no other reaſon for omitting it, than what I have already alledged; nor could I ever imagine, that, in a controverſy of this kind, which can be determined onely by the authentic facts and teſtimonies of antiquity, any one, who profeſſed to be ſearching into the real ground of it, would attempt to prove by a paraphraſe, what he could not prove from the text, and inſtead of the poſitive teſtimony of an Apoſtolic Father, which his cauſe neceſſarily required, take up with the arbitrary comment of a modern Prelate. Such are the ſhifts, to which theſe pretended champions of truth are driven in their defence of the primitive miracles: on which I ſhall make no farther remark, but refer my reader to Mr. *Toll*, who has very effectually and particularly expoſed the impertinence of all the little arts and ſophiſtry, with which they labor to extort miraculous ſenſes, out of the dark hints and equivocal paſſages of theſe Apoſtolic Fathers.

Dr. *Dodwell* procedes, in the next place, to defend the particular proofs, which his Father had formerly alledged from theſe ſame Fathers, to evince the continuance of the miraculous powers to their days. Theſe proofs, he ſays, *are recited by me with contempt:* yet I am conſcious, that in reciting them, I never had any ſuch intention; and cannot ſee how my words can fairly be interpreted to imply any. Nor has it ever been my cuſtom, to ſhew a contempt of any man, who had not juſtly deſerved it of me by ſome unprovoked and contemptible attack upon myſelf. In the preſent caſe however, I cannot but applaud the piety of a ſon, in expreſſing ſo jealous a concern for the reputation, and ſuch a zeal to defend the opinions of a learned and virtuous Parent.

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[1] Wake's Prel. Diſ. p. 113.

The firſt of theſe proofs is taken from the title or addreſs of *Ignatius*'s Epiſtle to the Church of *Smyrna*; upon which I have already ſaid what I thought ſufficient for my purpoſe in the *Free Inquiry*, and the objections, which Dr. *Dodwell* has ſince made to it, are ſhewn to be wholly inſignificant by Mr. *Toll* [1]. But as his defence of his Father's interpretation wholly turns upon the ſenſe of the word, *chariſma*; which he affirms to be a term *peculiarly appropriated to denote extraordinary gifts*; and as he makes much uſe of the ſame obſervation, towards confirming ſome other objections, in different parts of his work; ſo I ſhall add a word or two on this occaſion, to ſhew this favorite criticiſm to be vain and groundleſs, and the imaginary conceit of ſome minute Critic, who happened to want it, as this Doctor here does, for the ſupport of a particular hypotheſis. For the word, *chariſma*, as well in it's native and proper ſenſe, as in the uſe, which has ever been made of it both by the ſacred, and the Primitive writers, which ſignifies nothing more than a gift, whether it be natural or ſupernatural; ordinary, or extraordinary: wherefore in order to obviate the application of ſo ſilly an obſervation in our preſent controverſy, I had ſhewn how one of theſe Apoſtolic writers, St. *Clemens*, had applied the word, *chariſmata*, or gifts of God, to denote the different talents and abilities, natural and acquired, by which the characters of men are uſually diſtinguiſhed; as *ſtrength, riches, wiſdom, humility, continence* [2]. But Dr. *Dodwell* declares, that *he ſees no ſuch thing*;

Charisma

Strength &c.

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[1] Toll's Def. p. 23.

[2] Free Inq. p. 7.

and that the very gifts or *chariſmata*, here recited, *may ſtrictly be interpreted of ſupernatural endowments* [1]. What can we ſay to ſuch perverſeneſs as this? or of what uſe can it be to reaſon with ſo incorrigible a bigottry, which can reject the clear teſtimony of our ſenſes, rather than give up a groundleſs hypotheſis?

But my notion of the word, *chariſma*, may be confirmed alſo, as I have ſaid, by many teſtimonies from the ſacred writers, as denoting ſimply *a gift of God*, of what kind ſoever it may be: of which it will be ſufficient to give an inſtance or two. The gift of God, or *chariſma*, ſays St. *Paul*, is eternal life [2], and in other places, where he is ſpeaking of the gifts of God, we find him uſing the words, *chariſma* or *dorema*, indifferently, as terms ſynonymous, and denoting the ſame thing [3]. And we ſometimes ſee the ſame word applied to the gift of worldly riches, or an ability to miniſter to the neceſſities of the poor.

Dorema

On the whole then, as the ſole defence, which the Doctor makes of the proof of thoſe numerous miracles, which his Father had drawn out of this paſſage, is grounded on a miſtaken ſenſe of the word *chariſma* [4]; ſo the Father's proof, and the ſon's defence, muſt of courſe fall to the ground. And after all the pains, which they have been taking, to puzzle and confound the obvious ſenſe of the text, it will appear at laſt to be nothing more than this; that the *Church of* Smyrna, *being bleſſed with faith and charity*, which *Ignatius* extolls in this very Epiſtle, as the moſt excellent of all gifts, and what the Apoſtles themſelves prefer to the whole liſt of them, was deficient in nothing, which could be required to the accompliſhment and perfection of the Chriſtian Character.

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[1] Dod. p. 30.

[2] Rom. vi. 23.

[3] Ibid. 15, 16.

[4] Ch. p. 98.

The Doctor leads us on to another of his Father's proofs, on which he obſerves, that as I am apt to call for facts, ſo his Father has here preſented me one beforehand [1]. But the fact, here referred to, is not of ſuch a ſort, as I ſhall ever be diſpoſed to call for: nor do I find myſelf to be preſented, in this inſtance, with any thing more, than what had been offered to me in the laſt; an unnatural and extravagant interpretation of an obſcure paſſage, whence his Father had inferred the exiſtence of a chimerical fact, of which there is not the leaſt example or intimation in all hiſtory. But ſince the Doctor ſtrenuouſly defends the truth of his Father's interpretation; aſſerts the words to be incapable of any other ſenſe, and profeſſes a particular contempt of mine; it will be neceſſary to recurr to the paſſage itſelf, that by reviewing and comparing the two oppoſite expoſitions, we may ſettle at laſt it's real and unquæſtionable meaning.

Ignatius

St. *Ignatius*, in his Epiſtle to the *Romans*, written on his journey towards that City, where he was going to be expoſed to the wild beaſts in the Amphitheater, earneſtly begs of them, *that they would not ſhew an unſeaſonable good will to him, by hindering his martyrdom, but would ſuffer him to be food for the beaſts* [2]. The quæſtion now is; what were the means, which he referred to on this occaſion, and which the brethren might apply to the hindrance of his martyrdom? Mr. *Dodwell* the Father, affirm them to be prayers: which had a power, he ſays, of diſabling the beaſts from aſſaulting the Martyr, when expoſed to them in the Amphitheaters. But if that had been the meaning of *Ignatius*'s requeſt, it would imply, that the efficacy of ſuch prayers had been tried in other caſes of martyrdom, prior to that of *Ignatius*: yet no ſuch fact is to be found in all hiſtory, nor any mention made of it by the Apoſtles or Apoſtolic writers, except by a ſingle intimation in this very Epiſtle, where *Ignatius* ſays, that he would *encourage the wild beaſts, that they might be ſure to devour him, and not ſerve him, as they had done ſome, whom out of fear, they had not touched* [1],

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[1] Dod. p. 31.

[2] Wake's Ep. of Ign. §. 4.

But the whole tenor of the Epiſtle ſeems utterly to confute this *Dodwellian* hypotheſis. In which the Martyr acquaints *the Romans*, that he had written to the other Churches, and ſignified to them all, that he was willing to die for God, unleſs they, the *Romans*, ſhould hinder him [2]. Now if this hindrance was to be effected by their prayers, ſurely the prayers of every other Church muſt have been as effectual, and as much to be apprehended by *Ignatius*, as thoſe of the *Romans:* yet, tho' in this journey from *Aſia*, he wrote to the *Epheſians*; to the *Magneſians*; to the *Trallians*; to the *Philadelphians*; and to the *Smyrnæans*, as well as to the *Romans*; yet it was from the *Romans* alone, that he feared any obſtruction to his martyrdom, and whom he entreats to forbear it; to the reſt he ſignifies no fear of hindrance from them, nor any requeſt, that they would not attempt to give him any: which clearly ſhews, that the hindrance, which he ſo much dreaded, was not to ariſe from prayers, but ſome other means, which were peculiarly practicable to the Chriſtians of *Rome*, and of no other Church whatſoever.

Epistles to the Ephesians
Magnesians, Trallians, Phila-
delphians, Smyrnaeans, as well
as Romans.

I have already explaned my ſenſe of the paſſage in quæſtion, in the *Free Inquiry*, and ſhewn, that the requeſt of the Martyr, related to the interceſſion and intereſt, which the Chriſtian brethren of *Rome* propoſed to make among their friends and fellow citizens to preſerve him from his cruel fate. And this I have confirmed by the expreſs teſtimony of the original narrative of this martyrdom, written by perſons, who were preſent at it, and who for that purpoſe had accompanied the Martyr from *Aſia*. I have added the authority alſo of Dr. *Cave*, a writer in the higheſt eſteem with theſe admirers of the primitive Fathers, who in the Life, which he has written of this Saint, gives the ſame interpretation to the caſe now before us. Yet all this is of no weight with Dr. *Dodwell*, who contemns the notion of any intereſt or interceſſion that could be made for the life of the Martyr, as extravagant and impoſſible, and what will not bear an examination [1], and goes on to obſerve with great gravity, that *Ignatius* was ſentenced by the Emperor himſelf, who was now abſent from *Rome*, and had left no authority there which could mitigate the puniſhment: that no intereſt whatſoever could avail againſt an Imperial decree, nor, all the power of the Court of *Rome* prevent the Saint from being thrown to the wild beaſts, when *Trajan* had commanded it: ſo that the onely poſſible method of ſaving him, which remained, was a miraculous interpoſition in his favor to be obtained by the efficacy of prayer. This is the ſum of his reaſoning, by which he confirms his Father's interpretation: and this the examination, which my account of the matter will not bear: yet it is all trifling and declamatory, grounded on looſe conjecture, and an imperfect knowledge of the hiſtory of thoſe times, as I ſhall preſently ſhew, by opening a little more explicitely the real nature and circumſtances of the caſe.

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[1] Wake's Ep. of Ign. §. v.

[2] Ibid. §. iv.

Trajan

Theſe perſecutions of the Church, as the writers obſerve, were frequently brought on and forced as it were upon the Government, by the rage and clamors of the populace: whoſe hatred to the Chriſtians, was ever exerting itſelf by ſeizing and dragging them to the tribunals of the Magiſtrates, and calling

Popular Clamor.

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[1] Dod. p. 33.

loudly for vengeance and puniſhment upon them: and when this ſpirit was once raiſed it was not eaſily appeaſed till it had drawn on a general perſecution. This we may ſuppoſe to have been the caſe under *Trajan* and his ſucceſſors the *Antonines*, the moſt virtuous and juſt of all the *Roman* Emperors, yet all of them ſucceſſively perſecutors of the Church. It was the ſame ſort of indulgence to the humour of the populace, which obliged all the Emperors on ſome of the greater Feſtivals to entertain them with public ſhews and ſports in the Circus and Amphitheater, the chief of which were the combats of Gladiators and of wild beaſts, and the production of notorious criminals to be thrown to thoſe beaſts. This at preſent was the unhappy lot of the Chriſtians, whom the mob were often demanding to be produced on theſe occaſions for their ſport: and for this *Ignatius*, as the leader of the Chriſtians in *Aſia*, was now ſent to *Rome*, to be expoſed to the beaſts in the Amphitheater, for *the delight of the* Roman *people*, as the Emperor *Trajan*, who condemned him, is ſaid to have expreſſed it [1]. For one of thoſe Feſtivals was now approaching, for the celebration of which the diverſions above mentioned were always provided and ſupplied from all the provinces of the Empire.

Antonines.

When *Ignatius* approached towards *Rome*, guarded all the way by ſoldiers, the Chriſtians who came out to meet him, offered to employ all their intereſts and endeavours to prevent his execution, by moving the people, when aſſembled in the Amphitheater, to join with them in a common cry and demand to have his life ſpared. This was agreeable to the cuſtom of *Rome* in theſe very ſhews; where in the combats of the Gladiators, tho' the conquered party was doomed of courſe to die, yet if he had behaved ſo, as to excite the compaſſion of the people, and raiſe a general clamor in favor of his life, it was always granted to the demand of the aſſembly: and as the chief end of all theſe ſhews was to keep the multitude in good humour, ſo the caſe was the ſame with regard to perſons condemned to be thrown to the beaſts: where if the mob had taken a fancy to reſerve the life of any one in the ſame manner, they would certainly have been gratified in it.

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[1] vi.

This was the experiment, which the Chriſtian brethren propoſed to try in favor of *Ignatius*; nor was the propoſal improbable: their number was now conſiderable in *Rome*, and many of their friends and acquaintance might have been prevailed with to aſſiſt in ſo compaſſionate an attempt: ſo that when an infirm old man came to be produced in the Amphitheater, incapable of giving them any diverſion, by any ſort of reſiſtance to the beaſts, the Chriſtians hoped, that the united voice of their whole party, ſtrengthened by the help of particular friends, as well as of many others, whom compaſſion would naturally join to them on ſuch an occaſion, would be of force enough to procure the life of the ſaint, from the preſiding Magiſtrate: who from the nature of his office was intruſted always of courſe with a diſcretionary power of gratifying the people in any demand of that ſort.

I ſhall now leave our Doctor to the quiet poſſeſſion of his *Father's proofs*, as he calls them, which he may hang up in his parlor with the eſcutcheons of his arms, as a record of perpetual honor to his family, by inabling them to boaſt of an anceſtor, who by his ſingular ſkill and ſagacity, had recovered to the Chriſtian Church, after a ſucceſſion of ſeven centuries an illuſtrious miracle, wholly unknown and unobſerved by all the primitive Fathers. Nor can I omit on this occaſion to take notice of the management of Dr. *Church*, with reſpect to theſe

Dodwellian proofs, for ſince they came from his partner's Father, he thought it improper for him to meddle with them, and contented himſelf with the ſatisfaction of ſeeing them *defended at large,* as he ſays, *by the learned, judicious, and ingenious ſon* [1]. In which he gives us a little ſpecimen of the arts and craft of theſe Anſwerers: for tho' by dropping the defence of thoſe proofs, he betrays a conſciouſneſs of their weakneſs, yet he excuſes that ſtep with ſuch complements to the Defender of them, as may perſuade a common reader, that he takes them to be really ſtrong and completely defended, which yet he dares not venture to affirm.

There is another article, or two, relating to the miraculous gifts of this age, which it will be proper to clear up, before I take leave of theſe Apoſtolic Fathers. I have obſerved in the *Free Inquiry,* for the prevention of all unneceſſary cavils, that if from any paſſages which may be found in theſe Fathers, it ſhould appear probable to any; that they were favored on ſome occaſions, with extraordinary illuminations, viſions, or divine impreſſions, I ſhall not diſpute that point with them, but remind them onely, that the gifts of that ſort were merely perſonal, and did not in any manner relate to the quæſtion before us [2]. But in this, my adverſaries inſiſt that I have overthrown my whole argument. "Are not theſe, ſays Dr. "*Church,* the inſtances of miraculous powers? and if there "were any ſuch after the days of the Apoſtles, does not the "new ſcheme fall to the ground [3]?" Yes; I own them to be of a miraculous kind, if, as Dr. *Dodwell* ſays, *they be real* [4]. Who, by that expreſſion, ſeems to entertain ſome doubt about them himſelf, but whether they be real or not, it is certain, that they are nothing to the purpoſe of our preſent controverſy;

Illuminations, Visions, Impressions

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[1] Ch. p. 97. [2] Free Inq. p. x. [3] Ch. p. 107. [4] Dod. p. 42.

as not being the effect of any ſtanding power granted to the Church, for the converſion of the Heathens. All that I have allowed or ſuppoſed in this caſe is, that there may be a paſſage or two in theſe Apoſtolic writers, of a dubious ſignification, which weak and pious minds, perſuaded of the frequency of divine impulſes and illuminations, indulged to private Chriſtians, in all ages of the Church, may imagine, to denote ſomething of that extraordinary kind. Yet if they ſhould be ſtrictly interpreted to that ſenſe, the very matter of them would render the notion contemptible to all men of judgement. In one of theſe paſſages, St. *Ignatius* intimates, that he had been inſtructed by the Holy Spirit, concerning *the diviſions of the Church of* Philadelphia [1]. And in another, St. *Polycarp*, by means of a viſion, is ſaid to have foretold his own death, and the manner of it, three days before it happened [2]. To which I can

Socrates

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[1] He is my witneſs, for whoſe ſake I am in bonds, that I knew nothing from any man. But the Spirit ſpake ſaying on this wiſe; *do nothing without your Biſhop.* Epiſt. to the Philad. §. vii.

[2] *Socrates* alſo, as *Plato* relates, had a viſion, while he lay in the public priſon under ſentence of death: in which a beautifull woman appeared to him, and calling him by his name recited this verſe of *Homer*.

> Ἤματί μεν τριτάτῳ Φθίην ἐρίβωλον ἱκοίμην. Il. IX. v. 363.

Upon this, he declared preſently to his friend *Crito*, that he was certainly to die on the 3d day: which fell out accordingly. His viſion therefore was as prophetical as *Polycarp*'s, and equally confirmed by the event: yet they both probably flowed from the common ſource of all ſuch dreams or viſions; the ſtrong impreſſion, which the ſenſe of their uneaſy and uncertain condition, perpetually occurring to their waking thoughts, would naturally leave upon the fancy even in ſleep. Some Critics of great name ſeem to have been puzzled to diſcover, how *Socrates* could collect from this verſe, that he was to die on the 3d day; and have imagined it to be intimated to him by the word *Phthia*, as being derived from the verb φθίνω or φθίω, which carries in it the ſenſe of periſhing and diſſolution. But it was the natural and litteral ſenſe of the verſe, as it was ſpoken by *Achillès*, that gave him the hint; in which *Achilles*, on account of the affront which he had received in the *Grecian* camp, declares himſelf reſolved to quit it and return to *Phthia*, his native home, where a voyage of three days would land him in eaſe and peace. This *Socrates* took

I can apply nothing better than what Mr. *Toll* has already ſaid in anſwer to Dr. *Dodwell* on this very point; where after a brief review of the nature, the ſubject, and the evidence of theſe predictions, he adds; *to cut off therefore at once all reaſonings and inferences about them, let it be underſtood, that we diſpute the facts* [1].

But on this article of viſions, I am charged by my adverſaries with a groſs inconſiſtency: for after I have declared the pretended viſions of theſe Apoſtolic writers to have no relation to my argument, yet in the progreſs of my work, I have taken much pains in combating the credit of ſuch viſions as having a cloſe connection with it. *How are theſe things reconcileable?* ſays Dr. *Church*, *viſions and revelations are one of the five kinds of miracles, which he examines. If ſuch viſions*, &c. *do not at all relate to the preſent quæſtion, then all that part of the Inquiry, where theſe are conſidered, no leſs than ſixteen pages, are nothing to his purpoſe* [2]. Yet theſe things are all conſiſtent, and reconcileable at once to every one, who does not, either willfully or inadvertently, overlook the true ſtate of the fact.

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took to himſelf as an admonition, that he likewiſe ſhould be *at his home*, in the ſame time; for his philoſophy never conſidered this earth as his home, but promiſed him another world, where the ſouls of the juſt after death were to enjoy a perpetual ſtate of peace and felicity.

Again; it is ſaid of *Polycarp*, that he was a prophetic teacher, and that every word that went out of his mouth, either had been fullfilled or would be fullfilled. [*See Martyr.* §. xvi.] The ſame is ſaid of *Cicero*, by *Corn. Nepos*, who perſonally knew him, and long ſurvived him. *Such was* Cicero's *prudence*, ſays he, *that one would imagine it to be a kind of divination: for he foretold not onely thoſe things, which happened, while he himſelf lived, but gave warning, as a Prophet, of the things, which we now ſee in common practice.* [Vit. Attic. 6.] Now *Cicero*'s predictions are aſcrib'd onely to his prudence, *Polycarp*'s to inſpiration. But where's the difference? *Polycarp* foretold his own death, or ſome calamity perhaps, which was likely to happen to the Church. *Cicero* foretold the important events and revolutions, which happened after his death to the greateſt Empire in the world: for the defence of whoſe liberty he ſacrificed his life.

Cicero.

[1] Toll's Def. p. 38.

[2] Ch. p. 108.

It is allowed on all ſides, that the Apoſtolic Fathers make no mention of any ſtanding miraculous powers, as indulged to the Church in their days: and that the viſions, which are aſcribed to them, are collected onely from an incidental hint or two, of an obſcure and precarious meaning: and as ſuch viſions alſo were onely of a private and a perſonal kind, without any uſe or effect towards the converſion of the Heathen world; ſo it is evident, that they could not in any ſort belong to the quæſtion in diſpute. But in the following ages, when an appeal was expreſly, conſtantly, and openly made by all the Fathers, to a perpetual power of working miracles, as actually ſubſiſting among them; and to which the Heathens themſelves were invited to come, and be eye-witneſſes: and when in the catalogue of theſe miracles, *viſions* and *prophecy* are particularly enumerated, as common in the Church; and granted to women, and boys, and all ſorts of Chriſtians whatſoever; then viſions became the proper ſubject of my work, and required an examination of them, as well as any other gifts, which are clamed by the ſame Fathers. This is the genuin ſtate of the caſe, which clearly ſhews, that the inconſiſtency with which it is charged, flows wholly from the blunders and inattention of thoſe, who charge it.

Prophecy.

But there is another argument ſtill for the miraculous powers of this age, which our Doctors have kept in reſerve, as their forlorn hope, in order to rally, and renew the fight, with it, if their firſt attack ſhould prove unſucceſsfull. They were aware, that all the poſitive evidence of miracles, which could be drawn from the Apoſtolic Fathers, would be found too weak at laſt, to make any impreſſion in favor of their opinion: ſo that after all the pains, which they have been taking to puſh that ſort of proof as far as it would go, they now change hands;

take up the contrary ſide of the quæſtion, and attempt to confute me by that very ſilence of theſe Fathers, with which I had been preſſing them. *Cicero* in one of his youthfull orations, ſpeaking of certain witneſſes, whom he had been examining, ſays; *tacendo clamant*; he condemns the expreſſion afterwards, as too puerile; but the application of it made here by our Doctors is certainly much more ſo. No proof of an affirmative kind can reaſonably be drawn from mere ſilence, whatever force it has with regard to facts of hiſtory, is chiefly negative, oftner detracting from their credit, than adding any ſtrength to them in the preſent caſe, therefore when we reflect, that immediately before the times of theſe Apoſtolic Fathers, miracles are allowed to have ſubſiſted in great abundance; yet that the ſaid miracles have long ſince been withdrawn, at ſome time or other which remains ſtill unknown, and unſettled, we cannot be at a loſs to determine, whether the ſilence of half a century, which immediately ſucceded to that age of miracles, ſhould incline us rather to believe, that they were continued ſtill to the Church, thro' that ſilent period, or that they were actually withdrawn at that very time and no other.

Tacendo clamant

Dr. *Dodwell*, on the other hand, reaſons thus; " If their " ſilence were as total and uniform, as Doctor *M.* contends, it " might be urged ſtrongly on our ſide of the quæſtion. For " it is ſcarce credible, that they ſhould no where take any no-" tice of ſo great and ſudden an alteration, as muſt have hap-" pened, if the principal leaders of the Chriſtian cauſe, and " Governors of the Church had all at once been deprived, in " thoſe times of adverſity, of the privileges and ſuccours, which " common converts enjoyed in the generation immediately " preceding [1]." Now it is granted by all Proteſtant Doctors, and in particular by theſe two: that the Governors of the Church were in ſome age or other actually deprived of thoſe miraculous ſuccours, which their predeceſſors had enjoyed, yet the time, when this alteration happened, is a ſecret, which, as Dr. *Church* ſays, it is very difficult and perhaps impoſſible to us, to diſcover [1]. And if I ſhould aſk the reaſon, he would tell me preſently, becauſe the Fathers, as if aſhamed to tell us how they had forfeited thoſe favors, were wholly ſilent on that article. And thus Dr. *Dodwell*'s argument is utterly confuted by fact and experience as well as their own conceſſions.

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[1] Dod. p. 41.

But the moſt remarkable circumſtance in the preſent quæſtion is, that tho' all Proteſtants are agreed in allowing and believing, that after the third or fourth century at leaſt, all true miracles actually ceaſed, yet in all the ſucceding ages, there is not a ſingle leader or Governor of the Church, who either owns any ſuch ceſſation, or does not in the moſt grave and ſolemn manner atteſt the continuance of them in great abundance to his own age. Wherefore, as the ſilence of the Apoſtolic Fathers is ſingular, and not to be found in any other age whatſoever, from the days of the Apoſtles, down to the time of the Reformation; ſo that their circumſtances and characters, we may imagine, were ſingular alſo, and unlike to thoſe of every other age: by being deſtitute of thoſe extraordinary powers, which their predeceſſors the Apoſtles had enjoyed; yet unwilling to ſupply them by forgeries as their ſucceſſors are ſuppoſed, and the greateſt part of them allowed to have done.

Thus we ſee, how theſe Doctors, after all their efforts, to ſtrain and wreſt to their purpoſe, two or three obſcure paſſages of theſe Apoſtolic Fathers, have not been able to draw out the leaſt proof, of the ſubſiſtence of any miraculous powers among them; eſpecially of thoſe, which are the proper ſubject of this inquiry. For this is a diſtinction, which I find myſelf obliged to repeat, ſince all theſe Anſwerers, who appear to have known nothing of the ſtate of the primitive miracles, but what they learnt from my book, have not yet learnt from it, as in the firſt place they ought to have done, a right ſtate of the quæſtion. The poſition, which I affirm, is, that, after the days of the Apoſtles, no ſtanding power of working miracles was continued to the Church, to which they might perpetually appeal for the conviction of unbelievers. This is what the title of my work implies; what my whole reaſoning turns upon; and what I have often ſignified in the courſe of it, to be my preciſe meaning. Yet all my antagoniſts treat my argument, as if it abſolutely rejected every thing of a miraculous kind, whether wrought within the Church by the agency of men, or on any other occaſion, by the immediate hand of God. That God can work miracles whenever he pleaſes, no body, I dare ſay, will deny: but whether he has wrought any or not, ſince the days of the Apoſtles, is an inquiry, which I do not at all enter into: the ſingle point, which I maintain, is, that the Church had no ſtanding power of working any.

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[1] Ch. p. 4.

Miracles poſsible.

This diſtinction was ſeen at once by thoſe writers, who have appeared in the defence of my book, and who have juſtly rebuked theſe Anſwerers for their neglect of it; as being neceſſary to a right management of the diſpute, and obvious to every reader [1]. Yet in defiance of this admonition, they ſtill declare it to be a mere evaſion and ſubterfuge, never intended by me at firſt, but an after thought, contrived to elude the force of ſome objections, which were found to preſs me [1].

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[1] T. p. 29. Let. 16.

The diſtinction however, tho' juſt and clear, was not marked out by me, for the ſake of any advantage, which I might derive from it to my cauſe, for I know none, which it could give, but merely to ſhorten the diſpute, and to prevent unneceſſary wranglings, on facts and inſtances, which do not belong to it. For tho' I have no better opinion perhaps of the Miracles, ſaid to have been wrought without the Church, than of thoſe, which are affirmed to have been performed within it; yet as I confine my argument intirely to the latter ſort; I would not be drawn away, to an examination of facts, forein to my purpoſe, and but little regarded at preſent in the Chriſtian world, from my more important taſk, of diſſolving a chain of pretended Miracles which at this very day enſlaves and ties down the whole Chriſtian Church, to certain doctrines and practices, which tend to debaſe the ſimplicity of the Goſpel, and to give a ſuperſtitious turn to the piety and devotion of it's profeſſors. If my adverſaries therefore had paid a due regard to the diſtinction juſt mentioned, it would have ſaved them ſome trouble in many inſtances, and eſpecially in the ſtory of *Polycarp*'s Martyrdom, and the Miracles which accompanied it: on the defence of which they now exert all their zeal, declaring them to be deciſive, and to have utterly overthrown my whole Scheme [2]. Whereas in truth, whatever be the real character of them, they are nothing at all to the purpoſe, as being neither wrought by any ſtanding power in the Church, nor carrying any ſort of evidence, that any ſuch power was then ſubſiſting in it.

[1] Ch. Pref. p. 8, 9.

[2] In. p. 9. D. p. 36.

But if theſe Miracles have no relation, as I ſay, to the preſent diſpute, it is aſked, for what reaſon then did I introduce them into it? To which I anſwer, that it was for no other, than to expoſe the trifling and frivolous nature of them; and to ſhew, how fondly the Chriſtians of this early age were diſpoſed to give a miraculous turn to every unuſual incident, which might happen to take place on any important and affecting occaſion. My manner of introducing them declares my contempt of them; and I thought, that a bare recital of them would render them as contemptible to others as they appeared to myſelf [1]. But I have miſſed my aim with theſe Anſwerers, who have the confidence ſtill to affirm, that I do not diſpute the reality of them, but leave them in poſſeſſion of Miracles, as great and wonderfull as any in the Chriſtian Church; that I ſtand convicted by my own conceſſions and by acknowledging the genuineneſs of the Epiſtle, confirm the genuineneſs of the facts related in it: than which nothing can be more ſenſeleſs and abſurd. For tho' I call that piece one of the moſt authentic in all antiquity, I ſhew at the ſame time, that I am not declaring my own opinion, but that which was generally held of it by the Church: and when I mention the advertiſement annexed to the end of it, concerning the miraculous diſcovery of the ſame piece by a revelation from *Polycarp*, will any imagine, that I could believe ſo ſilly a fiction, tho' I made no reflection upon it? No, I took the very mention of it, as I have ſaid, to be a clear detection of it's forged character.

Revelation from Polycarp

Wherefore all, which I now propoſe to add on the ſubject of this wonderfull Martyrdom, ſhall be reſtrained to the article of *the Dove*, ſaid to fly out of the wound, that was made in the body of the Saint; this all my Antagoniſts give up at once as

Dove

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[1] Free Inq. p. 124.

incredible, and conſider it either as the blunder of the tranſcriber, by putting one word for another; or as an interpolation craftily inſerted into the text, after the time of *Euſebius*, who, in the abſtract, which he has given of this ſame narrative, takes no notice of this flight of the Dove. They are all aware, that if this article ſhould be thought genuin it would overthrow the credit of all the other Miracles in the ſame narrative; which for that reaſon they take great pains to clear from this fable, as they call it, which yet in defiance of all their efforts, will, upon a fair and critical examination, appear to be as authentic a part of the original piece, as any other miraculous fact related in it.

The firſt edition of the intire Epiſtle was publiſhed by Archbiſhop *Uſher*, with the paſſage of the Dove in it, from a Latin verſion, the oldeſt copy, as he tells us, of the whole piece, that was any where extant; ſuppoſed to have been written ſoon after the time of *Euſebius*, and to be the ſame, which is mentioned to have been publicly read in the Churches of *France*, till the ſixth century: which Copy Archbiſhop *Wake* alſo declares to be ſo well atteſted, that we need no further aſſurance of the facts which it contains [1]. All the Greek copies are of a later date, than the Latin verſion, yet all of them retain this article of the Dove: and from a collation of theſe the learned *Cotelerius* and *Ruinart* publiſhed their ſeveral editions of this ſame Epiſtle; both of them tho' Papiſts, very candid and judicious inquirers into the genuin monuments of Chriſtian antiquity: and in the laſt edition alſo, ſet forth by that eminent and proteſtant Critic M. *Le Clerc*, who was never ſuſpected either of ſuperſtition or credulity, the Dove ſtill keeps it's place, without any reflection or cenſure upon it by the Editor.

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[1] Wake's Prel. Diſc. p. 59.

Archbiſhop *Wake* indeed has omitted it in his Engliſh Tranſlation, for which he makes the following apology; "I confeſs, "I am ſo little a friend to ſuch kinds of Miracles, that I "thought it better with *Euſebius*, to omit that circumſtance, "than to mention it from Biſhop *Uſher*'s Manuſcript. And "indeed beſides the ſtrangeneſs of ſuch an adventure, I can- "not think, had any ſuch thing truely happened at his death, "that not onely *Euſebius* ſhould be ignorant of it, but that "neither St. *Hierom*, nor *Ruffinus*, nor the *Menæa* of the Greek "Church ſhould not have made the leaſt mention of it. "Wherefore there muſt have been either ſome interpolation, "or becauſe that does not appear, it may perhaps be better "accounted for by the miſtake of a ſingle letter [1]." This miſtake M. *Le Moyne* has endeavoured to correct by an ingenious emendation; which ſome of my Antagoniſts lay hold of, and others reject and prefer the notion of an interpolation as the beſt ſolution of the matter [2].

There is one reflection however added here by the Archbiſhop, which might have induced him, one would think, to have given us this ſtory as intire, as he had found it in all the editions; for if it has any weight in it, it refutes at once all the vain conjectures of theſe minute Critics, and proves the circumſtance *of the Dove* to have been an original part of the manuſcript. For he obſerves, upon the authority of M. *Le Moyne*, that *Lucian*, in his raillery on the death of *Peregrinus*, Lucian
who voluntarily committed himſelf to the flames, in the ſight of all *Greece* at the *Olympic* games; and out of whoſe funeral pile he makes a Vultur to aſcend, is ſuppoſed under the cha- Vultur
racter of that frantic Philoſopher, and his Vultur, to ridicule the Martyrdom and Pigeon of *Polycarp* [3]. The reflection is

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[1] Ibid. p. 57.

[2] Ch. p. 277.

[3] Wake's Prel. Diſc. p. 57.

allowed by the Archbiſhop to have *ſomething of a foundation:* and men of ſenſe, I dare ſay, will think it to have a good one, when they conſider, that the death of *Peregrinus* happened about the ſame time with that of *Polycarp*; and that *Lucian* was contemporary with them; an Apoſtate from Chriſtianity, and ever after it's bitter enemy; and taking all occaſions, to deride the doctrines, the rites, the credulity and ſuperſtition of it's profeſſors. There is a ſecond obſervation, intimated alſo by the ſame Archbiſhop, which ſeems to give a further confirmation to the genuineneſs of *Polycarp*'s *Dove:* for he refers us, in a marginal note, to *Prudentius*, who celebrating, in one of his hymns, the Martyrdom of a noble Virgin, called *Eulalia*, makes *a Dove to fly out of her mouth*, at the very moment, in which ſhe expired. Now a fiction of ſo ſtrange a kind would hardly have been hazarded, one would think, by ſo pious a writer, if there had not been a precedent for it, in the more famous Martyrdom of *Polycarp*.

Lucian an Apostate

Prudentius.

Eulalia

There is nothing now left, to diſcredit the ſtory of *the Dove*, but the ſilence of *Euſebius* with regard to it; whoſe account of this Martyrdom is allowed to be the oldeſt of any other whatſoever. But it muſt be obſerved, that *Euſebius* does not give us here the intire narrative, but an abſtract of it onely, or an abridgment, proper to be inſerted into his general hiſtory; in which the writer, according to his own diſcretion and judgement, always omits whatever he thinks inſignificant, or unneceſſary, or of ſuſpicious credit, or improper to be offered to public view. In the abſtract then; which was not written by him till about two hundred years after the fact, he has thrown out many paſſages which he found in all the earlier copies, and which are ſtill found in all the modern editions, and among the reſt, even one of the miraculous kind, in which the body of the Saint is ſaid, *to have ſtood in the midſt of the flames, not as fleſh, which is burnt, but as bread, which is baked* [1]. Now the ſentence here omitted, is found in all the editions, in common with the article of the Dove; yet is not imputed to any miſtake, or interpolation of a later date, but to the deſign and choice of the compiler, who might think the compariſon of *Polycarp*'s *body in the flames with bread baked in an oven*, too coarſe and unnatural to deſerve a place in his Hiſtory.

But whatever reaſon *Euſebius* might have for the omiſſion of this paſſage, he had certainly a much greater for the omiſſion of *the Dove*. The copies of this narrative appear to have been very rare, ſo that the ſcandal which this particular ſtory might have given, had not yet reached far, but lain dormant as it were and obſcure among a few onely: but if *Euſebius* had tranſcribed it into his Hiſtory, it would ſoon have been ſpread into all hands, and even of the chief perſons of the Empire, which was now become Chriſtian. We cannot doubt therefore, but that he willfully dropt it out of his abſtract, as theſe champions are now endeavouring to throw it out of all the copies: yet not on the account of it's being a miſtake or interpolation of any tranſcriber; but becauſe every body would ſee it to be a moſt flagrant and ſhamefull fiction. In ſhort; as the ſtory is of a kind, which was much more likely to be dropped, when found in any copy, than after it had been dropped to be recalled into it again; ſo it is not credible, that, after ſo great a man as *Euſebius* had publiſhed the narrative itſelf without it, any one would have the hardineſs to inſert or interpolate it, if it had not been found in all the other copies, which lay diſperſed in different hands, and believed to be a genuin part of the original piece. As to the ſilence of the later writers about it, it is of no weight

[1] p. 15.

at all: they followed onely the tranſcript of *Euſebius*, and were glad to get rid of ſo ridiculous a fiction, when they had ſo good an authority to plead for the omiſſion of it.

I ſhall now diſmiſs the miracles of *Polycarp*'s *martyrdom*, on which, tho' they have no relation to the quæſtion in diſpute, and are in themſelves utterly contemptible, my Anſwerers lay the greateſt ſtreſs, as if they were ſubverſive of my whole argument. They have my leave however, to enjoy them and inſult me with them as much as they pleaſe; but will find in the end, that the more pains they take to hold them up, the more they will hurt their own cauſe and ſtrengthen mine. Since men of ſenſe will never be brought to believe that any true Miracles could be ſubſiſting in that age, which has no better ſpecimen of them to give us, than this: nothing but a perplexed and patched up ſtory of a few trifling facts, of a precarious interpretation, which may reaſonably be imputed to the fiction of an Enthuſiaſtic piety, ever flattering and deluding itſelf with a vain perſuaſion of the preſent influence and interpoſition of the Deity.

And that this will certainly be the fate of theſe Miracles is confirmed to us already in ſome meaſure by the authority of a very learned and judicious writer, who, without any reſpect to the preſent controverſy, treating on the proper credibility of Miracles in general, and taking occaſion, in the courſe of his argument, to conſider the narrative of *Polycarp*'s *Martyrdom*, finds it neceſſary to declare, from the impertinence and inconſiſtence of the miraculous facts related in it, *that there is great reaſon to be jealous of the veracity of the compiler, and juſt ground to ſuſpect the credit of a ſtory, in which we ſee, that there has been tampering* [1].

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[1] See Two Previous quæſtions impartially conſidered. p. 26, 30.

N. B.

As to the teſtimonies of the ſucceding Fathers, which come next to be conſidered, it is agreed on all ſides, that they ſtrongly

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Hooper

N. B. The Martyrdom of Biſhop *Hooper*, in the Reign of Queen *Mary*, is compared by the Compiler of it, *J. Fox*, to that of *Polycarp* from a ſimilitude of ſeveral circumſtances, which are aſcribed to them both. I thought it proper therefore to preſent the reader with a ſhort abſtract of it, and a reflection or two to illuſtrate the compariſon.

When this Biſhop was faſtened to the ſtake, and the officers were going to bind his neck and legs with hoops of iron, he utterly refuſed them, as *Polycarp* is ſaid to have done, and would have none; ſaying; I am well aſſured, that I ſhall not trouble you, and doubt not, but that God will give me ſtrength ſufficient to abide the extremity of the fire. The fire did not preſently kindle, being made of green faggots, which were mingled with reeds to quicken them: at length however it burned about him, but the wind having full ſtrength in that place, blew the flame from him, ſo that he was no more but touched by the fire. Within a ſpace after, a few faggots were brought, and a new fire kindled with them, which burned at the nether parts, being driven about by the wind, ſave that it did burn his hair, and ſcorch his ſkin a little.—When the ſecond fire was ſpent, he wiped both his eyes with his hands, and, beholding the people, ſaid with an indifferent loud voice, for God's love, good people, let me have more fire. All this while his nether parts were burning, but the faggots were ſo few, that the flame did not ſtrongly burn his upper parts till a third and more vigorous fire being kindled ſome time after, put an end to his life. Thus he ſtood three quarters of an hour or more in the fire, even as a lamb, and patiently abode the extremity thereof, neither moving forwards nor backwards, nor to either ſide, till his nether parts being burnt, and his bowels fallen out he died as quietly as a child in his bed. *See Fox Chronic.* vol. iii. p. 156.

Now there is as much reaſon to imagine a miraculous interpoſition in the Martyrdom of this Biſhop, as in that of *Polycarp.* The flame blown all about him by the wind, ſcorched his ſkin, yet burnt his hair; which ſhews, that in ſome turnings of it, it muſt have made the reſemblance as it were of an arch, as it is ſaid to have done around *Polycarp*, or it could not have had that effect of burning the hair of his head, while it onely ſcorched his body, which may be ſaid therefore, as truly as *Polycarp*'s, *to have ſtood in the midſt of it, not as fleſh that is burnt, but as bread, that is baked.* But when the ſecond fire was found ineffectual to burn him, if the executioner had then diſpatched him with a ſword, there would have been a better pretence for a Miracle, than in the caſe of *Polycarp:* for he ſuffered the trial onely of one fire without being burnt, but this Martyr of two. There is another circumſtance obſerved by the Hiſtorian, which made *Polycarp*'s Martyrdom leſs grievous than this of *Hooper*, for when the fire did not burn, they miniſtered a quick diſpatch to *Polycarp* by a ſword, moved probably by ſome compaſſion, but the tormentors of *Hooper* ſuffered him without compaſſion, to ſtand three quarters of an hour in the fire. As to a voice from heaven to encourage the Martyr, whatever uſe it might be of in *Polycarp*'s caſe, there was no occaſion ly and explicitely affirm the continuance of many extraordinary gifts and miraculous powers, as conſtantly exerted in the Church through each ſucceding age. On this head then my Anſwerers allow, that I have fairly drawn out all the principal teſtimonies, which relate to our quæſtion, and enumerated all the extraordinary gifts and powers which theſe Fathers declare to have ſubſiſted among them. Nay inſtead of charging me with the ſuppreſſion of any, their ſole exception is, that I have added one to the liſt, which does not belong to it, and which none of the Fathers have any where clamed, *viz. the gift of expounding the Scriptures.* As this therefore is the onely point which theſe Doctors here diſpute with me, and which, as we ſhall preſently find, is a point of no ſmall importance to my main argument, ſo it will be neceſſary to employ a little pains in examining and clearing up the truth of it: where by opening the ground and reaſon of aſcribing this gift to the Church, I ſhall ſhew the reaſon alſo for which my Adverſaries ſo ſtiffly reject it.

Irenæus

Mysteries of God.

Irenæus, ſpeaking of the miraculous powers which were frequent in his time, ſays; we hear many in the Church indued with prophetic gifts; ſpeaking with all kinds of tongues; laying open the ſecrets of men for the public good; and *expounding the myſteries of God* [1]. Now as by the myſteries of God, which are ſaid here to be expounded in the Church, nothing elſe can reaſonably be underſtood, but the myſteries propoſed to us in the ſcriptures, ſo in a recital of this gift in another

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caſion for it here: *Hooper* had an aſſurance within his own breaſt, which he accordingly declared, that God would give him ſtrength to endure the extremity of the fire: and the event ſhewed that ſuch ſtrength was actually given to him, and that his declaration therefore was prophetical: and the patience and fortitude with which he bore his ſufferings, may juſtly be thought as miraculous, as of any the moſt celebrated Martyrs of the primitive ages.

[1] 2. vi.

part of my work, I call it *the gift of expounding the ſcriptures*; as I think myſelf warranted to do, by the manifeſt ſenſe of the words, which ſeem incapable indeed of any other. Dr. *Dodwell* on the other hand declares; that in all the paſſages that I had cited, he does not find any ſuch claim of an extraordinary power of expounding the Holy Scriptures. *Irenæus* indeed ſpeaks of expounding the myſteries of God, but ſays not one word of the Holy Scriptures [1]. Dr. *Church* affirms the ſame thing, and ſays; that *in looking over the accounts, he finds nothing like any claim to a miraculous gift of expounding the Scriptures* [2]. But what a pityfull way of quibbling is this? the word, *ſcriptures*, is not expreſly mentioned in the teſtimony, therefore, the gift of expounding them cannot be implied in it. But if *the myſteries of God*, do not mean the ſame thing, I ſhould be glad to know what other meaning they can poſſibly have: for tho' our Doctors reject this, they give us no other in it's place, but leave the words to ſhift for themſelves, and the reader to take them in what ſenſe he pleaſes, provided, that he does not take them, for *the myſteries of the Goſpel*, which it is their buſineſs to deny.

Important distinction between the Misteries and Scriptures.!

But beſides this paſſage of *Irenæus*, from which alone the thing itſelf may fairly be inferred, we learn from the expreſs and direct teſtimony of *Gregory*, called the wonder-worker, that the gift of expounding the Holy Scriptures was actually clamed and reckoned as one of the moſt eſteemed and excellent gifts of thoſe primitive times; and was poured out. in the largeſt meaſure, upon his Maſter *Origen*.

Gregory Wonder Worker

Origen his Master.

His words are; " *Origen* has received this greateſt gift from " God, with an abundant ſhare of it from heaven; to be the " Interpreter of the words of God to men; to underſtand the

See ye Greek at the bottom of the next page.

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[1] Dod. p. 57.

[1] Ch. p. 127.

" things of God, as if God himſelf were ſpeaking, and to " expound them to men, that men alſo might hear them [1]."

This then is the gift, to which we are referred by *Irenæus*, whoſe words cannot poſſibly be underſtood of any other, unleſs we ſuppoſe thoſe early ages to have been entruſted with ſome ſecret myſteries, peculiar to themſelves, and unknown to their Succeſſors, and which God had not thought fit to revele to us in the ſacred Scriptures.

St. *Paul* calls himſelf and his fellow laborers, *Apollos* and *Cephas, the ſtewards or diſpenſors of the myſteries of God* [2]. And in another place, alluding to the doctrines of the Goſpel, *great*, ſays he, *is the myſtery of godlineſs; God was manifeſted in the fleſh; juſtified in the ſpirit, ſeen of Angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory* [3]. Again, ſpeaking of the Goſpel and the preaching of Jeſus Chriſt, he calls them, *the revelation* of the myſtery, which was kept ſecret ſince the world began [4]. I could mention ſeveral other places, where *the myſteries of God,* or of *his will,* or *of the Goſpel,* are applied by Chriſt himſelf, to denote the doctrines taught by the Goſpel. And ſurely a divine faculty of expounding the myſteries of God, which run through both the Teſtaments, and conſtitute the nobleſt and moſt ſublime parts of each, muſt have been one of the moſt uſefull and important of thoſe miraculous gifts, which are pretended to have been indulged to thoſe primitive ages. Since *the myſteries of God* then, as they are mentioned by *Irenæus*, muſt be underſtood to refer to the ſame myſteries, which are affirmed by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, to be reveled to us in the

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[1] Δῶρον τὸ μέγιστον οὗτος θεόθεν ἔχει λαβὼν, καὶ μοῖραν παγκάλην οὐρανόθεν, ἑρμενεὺς εἶναι τῶν τοῦ Θεοῦ λόγων πρὸς ἀνθρώπους, συνιέναι τὰ Θεοῦ, ὡς Θεοῦ λαλοῦντος, καὶ διηγεῖσθαι ἀνθρώποις, ὡς ἀκούσωσιν ἄνθρωποι. Vid. Greg. Thaum. Orat. Panegyr. in Orig. p. 73. D.

[2] 1 Cor. iv. 1.

[3] 1 Tim. iii. 16.

[4] Rom. xvi. 15.

Holy Scriptures, the gift of expounding them cannot poſſibly ſignify any thing elſe, than the gift of expounding the moſt abſtruſe and difficult paſſages of the Scriptures, both of the Old and New Teſtament.

This point being thus ſettled, it opens my way to the defence of another, which I had affirmed in conſequence of it; that *Juſtin Martyr lays claim to this gift of expounding the Scriptures, as indulged to him in an extraordinary manner, by the ſpecial grace of God.* In proof of this, I have alledged three ſeveral paſſages from *Juſtin* himſelf, which I took to be ſtrong and expreſs to my point, and which had led ſeveral learned men before me into the ſame opinion. But with theſe more learned Doctors, my three teſtimonies from *Juſtin* are nothing at all to the purpoſe, nor imply the leaſt claim to any extraordinary gift; they inſiſt, that I wholly miſtake the matter, and through my ignorance of the proper ſenſe of the words, imagine them to ſignify ſomething divine and ſupernatural, when they ſignify nothing more than the *ordinary grace of God,* and *the ordinary aſſiſtance of the Spirit,* common, as they ſay, to all believers, and what every good Chriſtian was intituled to as well as *Juſtin* [1].

And here indeed I muſt confeſs the ignorance, with which I am charged by them of the proper ſenſe of theſe expreſſions, *the ordinary grace, and the ordinary aſſiſtance of the Holy Ghoſt.* They are uſed, I know, frequently among Chriſtians, but chiefly by that ſort, who know not what they mean, or rather mean nothing at all by them. But when Doctors of Divinity apply them, in the way of proof or argument, they ought ſurely to define the preciſe meaning of them, or otherwiſe, we cannot judge of the propriety, of what they pretend to deduce infer from them. I looked therefore into Dr. *Dodwell*'s book, to diſcover, as well as I was able, in what ſenſe I might ſuppoſe him to have applied theſe phraſes; but inſtead of any ſatisfaction, I found nothing there but perplexity and confuſion. He ſays, " that the word χάρις or grace is never uſed to deſcribe a " ſupernatural gift, but known to mean that ordinary coopera- " tion of the Holy Spirit with our beſt endeavours, which is " common to all believers; yet in the next words he treats " it as having no meaning at all, but as a common way of " ſpeaking, which pious perſons accuſtom themſelves to, of " aſcribing every good thing, which they poſſeſs, to the grace " of God: and ſo *Juſtin*, he ſays, when he ſpeaks of his " knowledge of the Scriptures, as wholly obtained by grace, " produces ſuch interpretations of them as appear to have been " drawn from his reaſon: yet in contradiction to all this, he " declares at the ſame time, that the aſſiſtance of the Spirit, " being a power added to our nature, may therefore in ſome " ſenſe be called *ſupernatural* [1]."

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[1] D. p. 62. Ch. 131.

Dr. *Church* is juſt as confuſed, as his partner, in his account alſo of this *ordinary grace:* he reaſons upon it through a page or two, without giving us any hint of what he means by it, and without knowing it, I dare ſay, himſelf. The ſole explication which he attempts of it is, *that in general it is neceſſary to open men's underſtandings, that they may underſtand the Scriptures, and embrace the truths of the Goſpel contained therein, but implies nothing infallible, or miraculous, or any thing more than what any one might attain by his own power* [2], *and enjoy if he would.* Now the onely idea, which I can form of the meaning which theſe Doctors would have us give to their phraſe, *of ordinary grace*, is, that we ſhould take it for a principle, neither abſolutely natural, nor ſupernatural, but of a mixed kind between both, and partaking alike of each: for under that character, it would be of excellent uſe in Theological controverſies, where the diſputants might make ſomething or nothing of it, juſt as their argument may require; might advance it to ſupernatural, when it wanted any help of that ſort, or when it demanded the contrary, might depreſs it to the ſtate of a mere human faculty. Being thus prepared and enlightened by the inſtruction of theſe Doctors for a right interpretation of the paſſages alledged from *Juſtin*, I now procede to a particular review and examination of them.

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[1] Dod. p. 62, 3.

[2] Ch. p. 131.

On the firſt of theſe paſſages, Dr. *Dodwell* obſerves, that I have not cited the whole, but referred to it onely, for which reaſon he thought it neceſſary to tranſlate the whole at large, which he has accordingly performed in the following words; "I will endeavour, ſays *Juſtin*, in his conference with a Jew, "to explain to you the Scriptures, without laboring to ſhew "merely any artificial ornament of language; for I have no "talent of that ſort, but grace onely is given to me of God, "to underſtand the Scriptures, of which grace I will pray, "that all may be freely and fully partakers, that I may not for "this, be liable to judgement, in that diſpenſation of it which "God the Creator of all things will exerciſe by my Lord Jeſus "Chriſt [1]."

Now in this paſſage *Juſtin* declares, that in the interpretations of Scripture, which he was going to lay before the Jew, he had no power or faculty of adorning them by any artfull or elegant compoſition of words, *but that grace alone was given to him by God, to underſtand his Scriptures.* And here I ſhall once more affirm; that this is the expreſs claim of an extraordinary gift, and that the context alſo, from which our Doctors labor to draw a contrary ſenſe, clearly confirms mine. They inſiſt on the other hand, that *Juſtin* had not the leaſt thought of claming any extraordinary endowment in this place, or any thing more, than ſuch a knowledge of the Scriptures, as every good Chriſtian might acquire by his own ſtrength as well as *Juſtin*: for he was not obliged *to pray*, ſays Dr. *Dodwell*, that all might be inſpired, if he had ſpoken of his own proficiency in the Scriptures in that ſenſe, but he thought himſelf bound *to pray*, that all might be favored with the knowledge of thoſe ſacred writings [1]. But the moſt ſurprizing circumſtance in this caſe is, how the notion of *Juſtin*'s *praying*, as the tranſlation here makes him to do, could enter into the Doctor's head: or how it was poſſible, for any man, who has the leaſt tincture of Greek, to tranſlate the word ϖαϱακαλῶ, by *I will pray.* A verb, which implies no ſort of reference or alluſion whatſoever to prayer, or to any act or office, which can be addreſſed to God, but to man onely, in the ſenſe of exhorting, admoniſhing, and entreating, *&c.* but beſides this blunder; which is of the groſſeſt kind, he makes a ſecond alſo, and that no ſlight one, in the ſame verb, by giving it the ſenſe of a future time, when it abſolutely indicates the preſent. Dr. *Church* indeed has rightly tranſlated the verb, by *I exhort and beſeech all*, to become partakers, *&c.* but the turn which he gives to the whole, and the inference which he draws from it, is the ſame with his Partner's, weak and falſe. They both reaſon upon it in the ſame manner; the one, that *Juſtin* could not have prayed; the other, that he could not have exhorted the Jews, with whom he was diſcourſing to partake of a gift, which they could not acquire by any endeavours of their own: for to exhort a man to acquire what is not in his power, is a flagrant inſult upon him [1]. But *Juſtin*'s exhortation carries no abſurdity of that ſort in it, but confirms the ſenſe, which I have given of his claming here, a divine and extraordinary gift: to which he immediately adds, of which grace, thus given to me, I exhort you all, without reward or envy, to become partakers, that I may not be found liable to puniſhment in the day of judgement. Where the exhortation has no ſort of reference to the acquiſition of any gift, either ordinary or extraordinary, nor any other meaning than to move them to take the benefit of that gift, which was given peculiarly to *Juſtin*, by attending to thoſe interpretations, which he was offering to them, and embracing that true ſenſe of the ſcriptures, which he was now qualified to teach them. For on what other account could he be apprehenſive of any puniſhment from God at the laſt day, but for the neglect of imparting and communicating to others the benefit of that extraordinary gift, which had been indulged to himſelf of unfolding and explaning the myſteries of God? of which duty he was now diſcharging his conſcience, and throwing the guilt upon thoſe onely, who refuſed to pay a proper regard to it.

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[1] Dod. p. 60.

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[1] Dod. p. 60.

There are two other teſtimonies, which I have produced likewiſe to the ſame purpoſes and from this ſame dialogue, in one of which *Juſtin* ſays to the Jew; *Do you think, that I could ever have been able to underſtand theſe things from the Scriptures, if by the will of their author, I had not received the grace to underſtand them* [1]? In the other place, ſpeaking of Chriſt, as *the ſole reveler of the Father to all thoſe, who know him*, he ſays, *he has reveled to us therefore all thoſe things, which, by his grace, we have underſtood from the Scriptures* [3]. But to theſe teſtimonies our Doctors anſwer, that *Juſtin* is not ſpeaking here of himſelf, but of the whole body of *the Chriſtians.* The words ἡμᾶς and ἐλάϐομεν are plural, ſays Dr. *Church*, and ſeem plainly to relate to the Chriſtians in general [1]. And Dr. *Dodwell* has taken care to diſtinguiſh the plural ſenſe in his tranſlations of them. Yet they might have obſerved, that one of theſe ſame teſtimonies, begins with a plural verb, which yet cannot admit any other interpretation, than of the ſingular number, as being addreſſed onely to the ſingle perſon of *Trypho.* And this indeed is a common cuſtom with all writers, to uſe the plural terms *we* and *us*, when they expect to be underſtood as ſpeaking onely of themſelves. Dr. *Dodwell* himſelf will ſupply us with many inſtances of it. Speaking of my opinion, he ſays, it appears to us to be a dangerous error. And in ſeveral places we find him ſaying; if *we* were diſpoſed to make repriſals; if *we* interpret ſtrictly; this might ſtrongly be urged *on our ſide*, &c. [2]. If I had a mind therefore to trifle here, as theſe Doctors do, I might contend that Doctor *Dodwell* could not be the author of this book, but the ſecretary onely of ſome little Synod, who jointly compiled it, for the plural expreſſions which he ſo frequently uſes; *it appears to us*, &c. are the true ſynodical ſtile, and cannot be applied to a ſingle perſon; were I diſpoſed therefore, I ſay, to cavil and divert the reader from the proper ſubject, I ſhould not be more impertinent than theſe Doctors have actually been; for as it is nothing to my purpoſe, whether Dr. *Dodwell*'s book was written by himſelf or with the aſſiſtance of friends, the matter of it being what alone I am concerned with; ſo it is not more to the purpoſe of theſe Doctors, whether *Juſtin* ſpeaks here onely of himſelf, or of a number of Chriſtians: for if he affirms either of himſelf or of all, that they were inſpired by God with the right interpretation of his

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[1] Ch. p. 131. [2] Di. p. 390. [3] Di. p. 352.

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[1] Ch. p. 132.

[2] Dod. p. 4, 30. 41.

Scriptures, that is the whole, which I contend for: and that he actually does affirm it, will appear, I think, unquæſtionably to every man unprejudiced, who conſiders the joint force of the three teſtimonies, which I have produced in the proof of it: and yet *Juſtin* is not talking of any common or ordinary points of the Scriptures, but of the moſt abſtruſe and recondite paſſages of the Old Teſtament, in which, as in a veil, the chief evidences of the Meſſiah were ſuppoſed to have been wrapped up. The ſame teſtimonies, as I have already hinted, have ever been underſtood in the ſame ſenſe, which I have given to them, by all men of learning, who have any eſteem for the Antient Fathers; and eſpecially by thoſe, who were the moſt eminently acquainted with the principles and monuments of primitive antiquity." Thus the learned *Halloix*, in his *Life of Juſtin*, affirms; that in his Dialogue with *Trypho* he ſeveral times declares, " that the gift of underſtanding the Scriptures, " was conferred upon him in a divine or extraordinary manner; " and that ſo great and beneficial a talent, intruſted to his " hands, made him extremely ſollicitous, leſt it ſhould prove " unfruitfull, and be kept up by him as an uſeleſs and hidden " treaſure [1]." Mr. *Tillemont* alſo, who, of all men, has publiſhed the moſt exact and voluminous collection, of the writings, the doctrines, the characters, and the lives of thoſe primitive Fathers, obſerves, " that of all the extraordinary graces, " which the Holy Spirit beſtowed upon the Church in thoſe " times, there were few ſo conſiderable, as that *of underſtanding* the Scriptures, which was communicated by ſingular fa- " vor to *Juſtin* [2].

This then will appear at laſt to be the genuin caſe of the gift of expounding the Scriptures or the myſteries of God. It is ex-

[1] 4. p. 23. not.

[2] p. 2, 358, 380.

preſly atteſted by *Irenæus*; was ever reckoned among the extraordinary gifts of thoſe times; was clamed eſpecially by *Juſtin*; and is affirmed to have been largely poured out upon *Origen*. Yet the moſt learned and inquiſitive of our Proteſtant Divines, and even thoſe, who pay the greateſt reverence to the characters of the Fathers, are forced to confeſs, that they cannot diſcover the leaſt inſtance or trace of any ſuch gift in the writings of thoſe Fathers; but on the contrary, that their interpretations of the Scriptures are generally ſo unnatural, and extravagant, that inſtead of being the dictates of a divine inſpiration, they ſeem to be the effects rather of an unſound mind and diſordered reaſon. Wherefore the falſehood and impoſture ſo manifeſtly diſcovered, and even confeſſed in the claim of this particular gift, muſt needs leave a ſtrong ſuſpicion, upon the authority of all the reſt. Yet theſe ſhall be heard likewiſe for themſelves, nor be implicitely condemned, till they have had a fair trial. For which purpoſe I ſhall procede to review two or three of the principal of them, and examine, what pretenſions they can juſtly make to that credit and belief which they ſtill generally obtain among Chriſtians.

The next miracle, which I propoſe to examine is, that *of raiſing the dead*. Which *Irenæus* expreſly affirms, *to have been frequently performed in thoſe days on neceſſary occaſions, by great faſting and the joint ſupplications of the Church of the place: and that the perſons he raiſed had lived afterwards among them many years* [1]. Now on this article, as Dr. *Dodwell* rightly obſerves, *there is great ſtreſs to be laid* [2]. I ſhall lay as much upon it therefore, as he pleaſes; ſhall conſent, that the iſſue of the whole may reſt upon it, and that the proofs and evidence of this capital Miracle, may determine the fate of all the reſt.

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[1] p. 186. 88.

[2] Dod. p. 78.

By way of objection to this teſtimony of *Irenæus*, I had obſerved, " that if a Miracle of ſo ſurpriſing a nature had been " *ſo frequent*, as he declares it to have been; performed, as it " were in every pariſh, or place, where there was a Chriſtian " Church, it muſt have made a great noiſe in the world, and " been celebrated not onely by the Primitive Fathers, but by " all Hiſtorians or Writers of thoſe times [1]." But here they cavil a while at the frequency, which I aſcribe to this Miracle: *To ſuppoſe this Miracle*, ſays Dr. *Church*, *to have been common in every place, where there was a Society of Chriſtians, or a Church, is a miſtake grounded on a falſe conſtruction of* Irenæus's *words* [2]. Which, tho' confidently affirmed and repeated by him, is utterly falſe. *Irenæus* atteſts it, as we have ſeen, to have been *frequently performed on neceſſary occaſions, by the faſting and joint ſupplication of the Church of the place*: which words, as they limit it to no particular place, ſo they neceſſarily imply it to have been common alike to all places, wherever there was a proper occaſion, and a Society of Chriſtians to pray for it; which is the very ſenſe, that I had given to them. And from the ſame words, Mr. *Dodwell*, the Father, has inferred, that the inſtances of this Miracle were more numerous in this age, than in that even of the Apoſtles: *They raiſed the dead*, ſays he, *in the Apoſtolic Churches, yet we have few examples of it, in the genuin acts of the Apoſtles*; *but in* Irenæus's *days, they raiſed not a few, but very often* [3].

As to the other part of my objection, that ſo wonderfull a fact, if it had been frequent, muſt have made great noiſe in the world, and been celebrated by all writers, they treat it with much contempt. " Who ſhould be expected to record theſe inſtances? ſays Dr. *Dodwell*, the Heathen Hiſtorians would

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[1] Free Inq. p. 72. [2] Ch. p. 189. [3] p. 42.

" not, if they had known and believed them, for it would " have been an act of ſelf-condemnation in them; neither " would Chriſtian Hiſtorians, if ſuch there had been; for " this would have been drawing down unneceſſarily perſe-" cution upon thoſe particular perſons; when a general aſſer-" tion of the facts would ſerve their argument as well [1]." " By what Hiſtorians, ſays Dr. *Church*, would this gentleman " have had theſe Miracles celebrated? By Jewiſh or Heathen " ones? this was not to be expected. Could they have diſ-" proved ſuch accounts, no doubt but they would have been " glad to do it, and we may depend upon it, that this had " been done; but to celebrate them, was what they were lit-" tle inclined to, if indeed they gave themſelves any trouble to " examine them [2]:" Another of my Anſwerers argues alſo in the ſame ſtrain: " 'Tis not probable, ſays he, a Heathen " Hiſtorian would have related ſuch a fact, had he known it. " 'Tis equally improbable, he ſhould know it: ſeeing the " Chriſtians knew, with whom they had to do; and that, had " ſuch an inſtance been made publick, they would not long " have enjoyed him, who had been given back to their prayers " [3]." The reader ſurely muſt think it ſtrange, that men who know any thing of human nature, or the hiſtory of paſt ages, can reaſon at ſo wild a rate, or imagine, that an Heathen, tho' he had ſeen the fact performed before his eyes, could reſolve to ſtifle the impreſſion, and perſiſt to deny the reality of it. Had the Heathens no curioſity, no love of truth, no deſire of knowledge in points of the higheſt importance? Yes; they poſſeſſed thoſe principles in a very great degree. The Superſtition and Idolatry of the popular religions, had long been contemned by all the wiſe and virtuous among them, who were perpetually ſearching after a more perfect and excellent rule. Theſe ſearches gave birth to various ſects of Philoſophy; ſome of which maintained the exiſtence, the unity, and providence of God; the immortality of the ſoul, *&c.* Others alſo taught the ſame doctrines, but as probable onely, not certain: while ſome ſtill doubted, and even flatly denied them all. On theſe points therefore, continual diſputes and arguments were carried on, in all the politer parts of the Heathen world; and eſpecially in *Greece and Rome*; ſo that, in ſuch circumſtances, the ſight of a perſon raiſed from the dead, offered in ſuch a manner, as carried with it a demonſtration of it's reality, muſt have been, of all ſpectacles, the moſt deſirable to a ſober and inquiſitive Heathen; as it would have ſettled all their diſputes, and corrected their philoſophy at once; and convinced them all, not onely of the certainty of a reſurrection; but of that very ſort, which all philoſophy had ever held to be impoſſible, *the reſurrection of the body.*

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[1] Dod. p. 78. [2] Ch. p. 186. [3] p. 114.

Mr. *Millar*, in his Hiſtory *of the propagation of Chriſtianity*, a work particularly recommended to his readers by Dr. *Church*, obſerves, "that by the good providence of God, philoſophy "began to flouriſh among the Heathens, a little before the "coming of Chriſt, which was of great uſe to refine the minds "of men, and render them capable of receiving the celeſtial "and ſublime truths of the Goſpel [1]." But theſe narrow minded Anſwerers, whoſe thoughts never reach farther, than the contrivance of an expedient, how to clear themſelves of a preſent difficulty, inſiſt; that an Heathen, tho' he had been an eye-witneſs of ſo ſtriking a fact, and intirely convinced of it's truth, yet, in ſpite of all conviction, would have been inſenſible of the force of it, and incited onely, to perſecute and deſtroy the particular actors in it. Nay, their whole repreſentation of the matter tends to perſuade us, that if the Heathens had been invited to ſee the Miracle performed in their preſence, they would have knocked the man down, as ſoon as he began to riſe, and ſmothered him again in his grave, before he was got out of it.

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[1] Millar's Hiſt. p. 1.

Such nonſenſe as this, which they would put upon us here for argument, can hardly fail of perſuading every intelligent reader, that a claim of Miracles, which wants ſuch a defence, muſt neceſſarily be fictitious: yet they procede with great complacency, to confirm it by ſeveral curious obſervations. "We "may obſerve in the next place, ſays Dr. *Church*, that this "Miracle differs from others in one thing; that there is no oc-"caſion for it's being openly performed. Becauſe Infidels, "who never had an opportunity of ſeeing it, yet if they have "ſufficient evidence of it, ought in reaſon and conſcience to "believe it. And ſufficient evidence of it's reality may eaſily "be had, even tho' no one witneſs was preſent at the working "of it [1]."

This obſervation indeed is new and purely his own; never heard, I dare ſay before, or thought of by any man, but is ſo contrary to all the notions, which Hiſtory and experience have taught us on this article, that I cannot help wondering, whence it could come into this Doctor's head, or what facts and inſtances he can have to ground it upon. If the end of all Miracles be to create faith and conviction: and if when performed before our eyes, they impart a ſtronger conviction, than an hundred witneſſes can give, who had not ſeen them, it cannot be the peculiar difference of the greateſt of all Miracles, that it need be reported onely, not ſeen; and that, in diſtinction from all other Miracles, it ſhould require our belief, upon the teſtimony even of thoſe, who themſelves had not ſeen it: for ſurely, the more uncommon and ſurprizing the nature of any miracle may be, the more it will always want to be openly performed.

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[1] Ch. p. 187.

In the hiſtory of the Goſpel we find the Miracles of this kind, which were wrought by our Lord, to have been performed by him, in broad day light and the midſt of crouds. Thus in the City of *Nain*, the widow's ſon was raiſed from the bier, as they were carrying him to his grave, *in the ſight of much people: ſo that the rumor of it went forth through all* Judæa, *and all the region round about* [1]. *The daughter alſo of the Ruler* was raiſed by him in ſuch a manner, *that the fame of it is ſaid to have gone abroad into all the land* [2]. And in raiſing *Lazarus*, *Jeſus lift up his eyes, and ſaid; Father, I thank thee, that thou haſt heard me. And I knew, that thou always heareſt me; but becauſe of the people, which ſtand by, I ſaid it, that they may believe, that thou haſt ſent me. Upon which many of the Jews, who had ſeen the things, which he did, believed on him* [3].

What was it then, that could poſſibly ſuggeſt ſo crude an obſervation to our Doctor? Why nothing, but the character of this very primitive Miracle, which we are conſidering as it is ſtated and deſcribed by *Irenæus*. With this indeed his obſervation perfectly tallies: for this, we muſt own, was of a kind, which had no occaſion to be openly performed: the very report of it rendered it ſuſpected, and the production of it would have blaſted it. For as they themſelves allow, it was not deſigned for the public, nor the converſion of the Heathens; but to be performed onely in the dark, among a few of the faithfull; on certain neceſſary occaſions; which are neither ſpecified, nor diſcoverable to any man. All which is ſo palpably contradictory to the character and effects of this particular Miracle, that it can hardly fail of convincing every reader, that the original claim of it was falſe; and the inſtances of it, which are ſaid to have ſubſiſted among the Chriſtians, mere fictions, contrived by the crafty and political, to feed the credulity of the pious and the ſimple.

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[1] Luke vii. 17. [2] Matt. ix. 26. [3] John xi. 41, &c.

But in what ever light we conſider the account of this Miracle, as it is given by *Irenæus* and defended by theſe Advocates, it will appear to be nothing elſe but a ridiculous and contemptible tale. For ſince the converſion of the Heathens, the moſt important of all ends, and to which all other Miracles were chiefly applied, was not intended by it, what *neceſſary occaſion* could there be for it, among the private and diſperſed Societies of the Chriſtians, or what cauſe of weight enough, to engage a whole Church in a courſe of faſting and prayer for the performance of it? The Chriſtians of this age, inſtead of being fond of life, were longing to be diſſolved, and to be with Chriſt; were thirſting after an immortality of glory, and offering themſelves forwardly to Martyrdom, that they might obtain it a few years the ſooner: they wanted no Miracle for the confirmation of their faith; the firmneſs of which was the ground of God's favor to them, and of their own fortitude, in ſuffering thoſe perſecutions, to which it expoſed them: they were perſuaded of the reſurrection of the body, and to pray therefore, to ſee an inſtance of it, would not have been an act of piety, but of levity. And to ſuppoſe, that a whole Congregation ſhould be induced to faſt and pray, that a departed friend, or parent, or huſband ſhould be reſtored to life, to relieve the preſent grief, or gratify the fond affection of particular perſons or families, cannot be thought a *neceſſary occaſion*, or an end worthy of the interpoſition of God.

Then as to the perſons, who were ſo raiſed; they could not poſſibly receive any imaginable benefit from a favor ſo extraordinary: for after they had been delivered from all the troubles of this life, it muſt have been an occaſion of miſery and mortification to them, to have been thrown back again into the midſt of them: and when they were arrived at their journey's end, and within the reach of that bliſs, which had been the object of all their hopes, and the end of all their wiſhes, to be thruſt back from it again at the very moment of fruition, muſt have been a diſappointment, of all others, the moſt grievous to a pious ſoul. And for this, what amends could they receive in being reſtored to ſo wretched a life, as they muſt have led from the time of their reſurrection; ſculking perpetually, and hiding themſelves among a few friends? ſince if they happened to be diſcovered, they were ſure, as theſe Anſwerers tell us, of being deſtroyed by the Heathens.

But after all theſe evaſive expedients and ſenſeleſs conceits of theſe Doctors, it is not poſſible, from the nature of the thing, that this Miracle could have been conceled; or that the perſons, who were raiſed, and lived many years after it, could live undiſcovered by the Heathens. In every place, where there was a ſociety of Chriſtians, whether in a City, Town, or village, the Heathens were by far the majority, and ſurrounded them on all ſides; ſo that a Chriſtian could not die, or be carried at leaſt to his grave, without being obſerved by ſome or other of his Heathen neighbours; much leſs could he be called again into life, without aſtoniſhing all thoſe, who had ever ſeen or known him before, and whoſe aſtoniſhment would preſently have been communicated through the whole neighbourhood: and as the ſame miracle is affirmed to have been worked indifferently in every place, where there was a neceſſary occaſion, and a number of Chriſtians, to faſt and pray for it; ſo the fame of it muſt needs have reached, as far as the Goſpel itſelf was then ſpread.

It is allowed however in the preſent caſe, that the Heathens knew nothing at all of the matter, but conſtantly held the fact itſelf to be impoſſible, which I have urged as a clear proof, that they had never ſeen or heard of it's being performed, except in ſuch a manner, as carried with it a ſuſpicion of fraud and colluſion. But *this prepoſſeſſion*, ſays Dr. *Dodwell, was the very thing, which prevented their attending to it at all; for they could not think, that they needed particular circumſtances to diſprove that, which they thought impoſſible in itſelf* [1]: which, like all the reſt of his remarks on this article, has neither ſenſe nor force in it. For let us ſuppoſe the claim of this ſame Miracle to be made by any Chriſtians in our own days; in which there is not a ſingle Proteſtant of any judgement, who is not as ſtrongly prepoſſeſſed, as the Heathens antiently were, with a perſuaſion, that no mortal now living, nor any number of them, can poſſibly raiſe the dead. Yet if he was well informed, that it had been done by any particular congregation, and upon an invitation to ſee it done by the ſame, ſhould there receive a full conviction of it's reality, by ſeeing a perſon actually raiſed from the grave before his own eyes; he could not help adoring the power and majeſty of God, in a work of ſo wonderfull a nature, and revering at the ſame time the ſanctity of thoſe men and their prayers, by which God was moved to interpoſe, in ſo extraordinary a manner. And this the Heathens themſelves would certainly have done in the ſame caſe; a Miracle of this ſort offered to the conviction of their ſenſes, would have ſtifled all their prejudices at once, how ſtrong ſoever they had been: for human nature was ever the ſame in all ages; and it was as impoſſible, for men of judgement, to withſtand the clear evidence of their ſenſes in antient times, as it is, for men of the ſame character, to reject it in the preſent.

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[1] Dod. p. 79.

But I had offered one objection to the reality of this miraculous gift, which, of itſelf, I take to be deciſive, and a ſure proof, that the claim of it muſt have been falſe. The objection is this; " that in the very ſame age, in which *Irenæus* declares " this Miracle to be often performed, and that perſons ſo raiſed " had lived afterwards among them many years; yet when *Autolycus*, an eminent Heathen, challenged his friend *Theophilus*, " *Biſhop of* Antioch, to ſhew him but one, who had been ſo " raiſed among the Chriſtians, with a promiſe of turning " Chriſtian upon it himſelf, *Theophilus* diſcovered by his anſwer, that he was not able to give him that ſatisfaction [1]." Dr. *Dodwell* allows this objection to be plauſible, and the moſt to my purpoſe of any in my whole performance [2]. And in order to refute, or at leaſt to weaken it's force, recurs to his uſual expedient of affirming, that *I have miſtaken the anſwer of* Theophilus, *given a wrong turn to it*, *and miſrepreſented it in ſeveral points*; to confirm which, he gives us a tranſlation of the whole, cooked up to his own ſenſe in the following words.

" Farther, you deny the reſurrection of the dead. For you " ſay, ſhew me even one raiſed from the dead, on the ſight " of which I will believe. But in the firſt place, what great " thing is it, if you do believe, what you ſee yourſelf. Farther, if you can believe, that *Hercules*, that burned himſelf, " does ſtill live; and that *Eſculapius*, that was killed by lightning, was raiſed again; can you diſbelieve the things, which " are reported to you by God himſelf? In like manner, if I

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[1] Free Inq. p. 73. [2] Dod. p. 79.

“ ſhould ſhew you one raiſed from the dead and ſtill living, “ even this you would diſbelieve, *&c.* [1].”

From this paſſage, as it is here tranſlated, the Doctor attempts to ſhew, that *Autolycus*'s demand was, not to ſee a perſon, *who had been raiſed from the dead among the Chriſtians,* but to ſee one actually raiſed upon the ſpot, and in his preſence, by *Theophilus* himſelf; and that the onely point, which he was here ſpeaking of was *the general reſurrection of the dead*; *which he at preſent denied, but owned he would believe, if he could ſee an inſtance of it* [2]. An interpretation wholly forein to the purpoſe, and utterly inconſiſtent with the genuin ſenſe of the words. For the firſt part of them, which chiefly relate to the point in quæſtion, ſhould be rendered thus: *But farther*; *you deny, that the dead are now raiſed*; *for you ſay, ſhew me but one, who has been raiſed from the dead, and by ſeeing him I will become a believer.*

This is the indiſputable ſenſe of the words, and exactly conformable to the repreſentation, that I had given of them: in which we ſee a plain reference to a report, which was then current and affirmed by all the Chriſtians of thoſe days, that there were ſeveral perſons actually living among them, who had been raiſed from the dead. This was the fact, which *Autolycus* could not believe, and on which therefore he required ſatisfaction from his friend *Theophilus,* by ſeeing an inſtance produced before him of any one who had been ſo raiſed: in which *Theophilus,* how deſirous ſoever he might be, to gratify him, was not able to do it. Every ſchool-boy would readily tell us, that νεκροὺς ἐγείρεσθαι [3], denotes an action of the preſent time, ἐγερθέντα one, that is paſt. Yet our Doctor to ſupport this paultry ſhift, of putting *the general reſurrection* upon us, as the ſole point here referred to, has quite reverſed the matter; and of the two capital words, on which the force of the whole ſentence turns, has given a future ſenſe to that, which indicates the preſent, and a preſent, to that which indicates the paſt; and to ſay the truth, his whole tranſlation betrays either ſuch a bigottry, as will not allow any ſenſe, in any words, which does not tally with his own prejudices; or ſuch an ignorance of the Greek, as is incapable of diſcovering what their ſenſe really is.

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[1] Dod. p. 83.

[2] Dod. p. 84.

[3] Our Lord uſes the ſame form of expreſſion, in his anſwer to the meſſage ſent to him by *John the Baptiſt,* where among the other proofs of his Meſſiahſhip he adds, νεκροὶ ἐγείρονται, *the dead are raiſed up.* Matt. xi. 3.

But what ſurprizes me the more in this tranſlation, is, that it flatly contradicts his Father's expoſition of it, from which, as being the ſame with my own, I hoped to have gained ſome little authority with him in an argument, which he owns to be plauſible. In other inſtances, we have found him ſtiffly adhering to the interpretations of his Father, and ſtrenuouſly defending them, tho' manifeſtly erroneous; which I could not help imputing to his piety, and zealous regard for the reputation of a learned and worthy parent. But what ſhall we ſay to him now, when we find him rejecting his Father's ſenſe, and declaring it to be *wrong*, tho' it be demonſtrably right, and what he ought to have embraced, if it had come from an adverſary. His Father perfectly knew, that the participle, ἐγερθέντα, could not poſſibly mean any thing elſe, in it's proper and grammatical ſenſe, but a perſon, who had *already been raiſed from the dead*: but the ſon affirms it to ſignify one, who was about to be raiſed, or in the act of riſing, which ſhews, that he had nothing of that filial tenderneſs, with which I had imagined him to have been indued, but the true ſpirit of a controverſial zealot, whom neither the authority of Grammar, nor of a Father, nor of truth itſelf can move, whenever they thwart the Syſtem, which he had undertaken to defend.

But that *Autolycus*'s demand wholly relates to a perſon, who *had been actually raiſed*, is proved beyond all doubt by *Theophilus*'s anſwer to it, as it ſtands here tranſlated, even by the Doctor himſelf: *for if I ſhould ſhew you one*, ſays he, *raiſed from the dead, and ſtill living*, even this *you would diſbelieve*: which directly correſponds with that ſenſe of it, and cannot poſſibly do ſo with any other. As to the character of *Autolycus*, we know nothing more of it, than what may be collected from the writings of *Theophilus*, who addreſſed three books to him, containing an Apology for the Chriſtian religion, drawn with a particular view of ſatisfying *Autolycus*'s ſcruples, and making him alſo a convert, as *Theophilus* himſelf was. From his familiarity and friendſhip with this eminent Biſhop, we may juſtly infer, that he was of a candid, reaſonable, and inquiſitive diſpoſition; a contemner of the Idolatry and Superſtition of the public religion, and deſirous to embrace a more rational worſhip if he could any where find it. In theſe circumſtances Chriſtianity was propoſed to him, to which he ſeems to have been inclined, but the miraculous pretenſions of the Chriſtians appear to have ſhocked him, and infuſed certain ſcruples, which were firſt to be removed. He could not believe, that they had the power, of which they boaſted, of *raiſing the dead*; or that there were any perſons then living among them, who had been ſo raiſed: this was the point, in which he required to be ſatisfied; and if *Theophilus* would ſhew him an inſtance of any ſuch perſon, ſo as to convince him of the reality of the fact, he promiſed to turn Chriſtian upon it [1].

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[1] Dr. *Dodwell*, with his uſual obſtinacy, flatly denies, that *Autolycus makes any ſuch*

The demand was certainly reaſonable, and ſuitable to the character of a diſcreet, and ſober inquirer. And if the claim of this Miracle had been true; as it is affirmed by *Irenæus*; it could not have been difficult to have produced one; nor could there have been an occaſion more worthy of it, than the converſion of an illuſtrious and virtuous Heathen, who ſought and offered to become a believer on that very condition. Nor can we imagine, but that *Theophilus*, who was taking ſo much pains to convert him, and addreſſed three books to him with that very view, would not have been glad to have gratified him in this requeſt, if it had been in his power, and ſo procured his converſion at once. For it is very remarkable, that *Theophilus* does not excuſe himſelf from giving the ſatisfaction, which was deſired by alledging, what theſe modern Advocates take it into their heads to ſuppoſe, that the perſons who had been raiſed ſome years before were now dead again the ſecond time; nor does he plead any difficulty in the production of an inſtance, on account of their being all diſperſed and removed to any diſtant countries; and much leſs, would he have ſaid, what our ingenious Doctors have contrived to ſay on this occaſion, that the production of ſuch a perſon, would have *expoſed him onely to perſecution*, or *to have been knocked on the head upon the ſpot*: but he inſiſts onely, that if he ſhould produce one, *Autolycus* would not ſtill believe it. Which ſhews, that all their pretended inſtances of this great Miracle were of a kind, that could not ſtand the teſt of a fair examination, nor give any

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ſuch promiſe, in the paſſage above recited; yet the words themſelves are expreſs, ἵνα ἰδὼν πιστεύσω, and cannot poſſibly be interpreted to any other ſenſe: aud we find the ſame verb πιστεύω, continually applied in the New Teſtament, in the ſame manner, to denote a man's becoming a believer, not of this or that particular point, but of the whole faith of Chriſt. *Mark* xv. 32. ἵνα ἴδωμεν καὶ πιστεύσωμεν. Matt. xxvii. 42. John ix. 38. ὁ δ' ἔφη, πιστεύω, &c.

ſatisfactory proof of their reality, to a candid and impartial inquirer. And this opinion will be the more clearly confirmed to us, by conſidering the ſhuffling, futile, and inconſiſtent account, which theſe Doctors have given of the conduct of *Theophilus*.

Dr. *Dodwell*, who by a groſs miſtake contends, that *Autolycus*'s demand was, to ſee the Miracle of raiſing the dead, performed before his eyes by *Theophilus* himſelf, tells us, " that to " aſk, why ſuch a power was not granted on this occaſion, " for the ſatisfaction of *Autolycus*, is entering into the counſels " of Providence, who might have good reaſons for not vouch- " ſafing this method of conviction to him. That after the " other evidence, which had been offered to him, it might " not be indeed proper to offer a Miracle for his conviction. " But that if ſuch a Miracle had been wrought in his preſence, " he would have found ſome way or other to evade it; would " probably have ſuggeſted, that there was a confederacy, be- " tween them, or have imputed the recovery to the force of " art, or offered ſome ſuch evaſion, as hardned infidelity can " always ſuggeſt [1]."

Dr. *Church* obſerves, " that Mr. *Dodwell*, the Father, " thought this anſwer of *Theophilus* a proof, not onely that " this Miracle had then ceaſed, or at leaſt was no longer " common; but alſo, that thoſe, who had been raiſed, had, " in the ſpace of forty years, been dead again. Which ſup- " poſitions anſwer the difficulty, and are neither of them diſ- " proved by me. However, it muſt be owned, adds he, that " *Autolycus*'s demand was unreaſonable, eſpecially, if the caſe " be, as Mr. *Dodwell*'s ſon has endeavoured to ſhew, that *Au-* " *tolycus*'s demand was to ſee one raiſed from the dead in his

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[1] Dod. p. 78. 84.

" ſight, and not one, who had been raiſed before; which " would have been little or no ſatisfaction to him. By this " way of conſidering the paſſage, the foundation of the ob- " jection is removed. On the whole therefore, tho' *Theophilus* " did not produce any inſtance of this Miracle, to gratify the " vain humour, and idle curioſity of his Antagoniſt; this " cannot ſet aſide the poſitive and expreſs teſtimony of *Ire-* " *næus* [1]."

Such is their way of refuting a poſitive fact; by a number of ſuppoſitions, either wholly vain and fancifull, or grounded on their own blunders and ignorance of the ſubject, which they are treating. The fact however is inconteſtable. *Autolycus* demanded to ſee a perſon, who had been raiſed from the dead; could not be gratified in that demand, for which our Doctors think it a ſufficient apology, to ſay; " that Providence might " judge it improper, to give that conviction, to *his vain hu-* " *mour and idle curioſity*; that there was evidence enough of an- " other ſort, which ought to have convinced him; and if a Mi- " racle had been wrought for the purpoſe in his preſence, he " was ſuch an *hardned Infidel*, that it would have made no im- " preſſion upon him." Whereas the whole, which we can fairly collect, either of the nature of the man, or of his demand, is; that he was a candid inquirer after truth, and ready to embrace it, where-ever it could be found; and that his demand, inſtead of being the effect of any idle humor or curioſity, was the reſult of a ſerious and deliberate intention, to become a convert to Chriſtianity, if he could be convinced onely of this ſingle point, *that there were any perſons then living among the Chriſtians, who had been raiſed from the dead.* And the ſole inference, which we can reaſonably draw from the inability of this Biſhop to give him that ſatisfaction is; that there were no ſuch perſons then in being: and conſequently, no ſuch miraculous gift then ſubſiſting in the Church, how poſitively ſoever it may be atteſted by *Irenæus*; *Theophilus* lived in the ſame age with him; and tho' we ſhould ſuppoſe him to have been ſomewhat younger, and to have lived ſome years longer, yet if the Miracle itſelf had ceaſed, after it had been exerted for ſome ſhort time, according to the teſtimony of *Irenæus*; or if the perſons, who had been raiſed in the days of *Irenæus*, were all dead again before *Theophilus* wrote, it is certain, that he would have mentioned either the one, or the other to excuſe his want of power to ſatisfy his friend. But he had no ſuch excuſe to make; and the conceits of this ſort, to which our modern Advocates now recurr, are but the vain expedients of men, laboring to prop up a lame cauſe, unable to ſupport itſelf, by the help of fictitious circumſtances, of their own invention.

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[1] Ch. p. 189.

Beſides all theſe various improbabilities, which appear upon the very face of this miraculous gift; I have obſerved, that it ſtands upon the ſingle teſtimony of *Irenæus* [1], and is not mentioned or referred to in any manner, by any of the ſucceding Fathers, through the three firſt centuries: which circumſtance alone ſeems to be ſufficient to blaſt it's credit. For it is ſcarce poſſible to conceive, if this gift had really ſubſiſted in *Irenæus*'s days, and in ſo full a meaſure, as he affirms it to have done, that all the later writers, and the Apologiſts eſpecially, could have omitted the mention of it, or ſuffered the memory of a fact, ſo reputable to their cauſe, to have been loſt and buried in oblivion, when they make it their buſineſs to diſplay, in the ſtrongeſt terms, every other miraculous power, which they pretend to have been indulged to them from heaven; *of caſting out Devils, curing diſeaſes, prophetic trances,* &c. This, I ſay, might reaſonably incline us to ſuſpect, that this attempt of ſome of the more crafty Chriſtians, to aſſert and keep up a pretenſion to this primary Miracle, having been found vain and impracticable, and without any other effect, than of drawing the greater deriſion and contempt upon them from the Heathens, they prudently choſe to drop and bury it for the future in utter ſilence.

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[1] Free Inq. p. 188.

I have further obſerved, that in the earlier times alſo, after the days of the Apoſtles, there is no intimation of the ſubſiſtence of this Miracle in the Church, except in a ſingle inſtance, found in the writings of *Papias*, which *Euſebius*, who ſlightly touches it, ſeems to rank *among the other fabulous ſtories, recorded by that weak man* [1]. But here my Anſwerers flatly contradict me; " *Euſebius*, ſays Dr. *Church*, cites *Papias* as ſaying, " that this Miracle had been done in his time. Neither can I " diſcern the leaſt doubt or diſtruſt in the Hiſtorian, tho' this " Gentleman is pleaſed to ſay, *he ſeems to rank it among the other* " *fabulous ſtories, delivered by that weak man.* And however weak " *Papias* was, he may be a good witneſs of ſuch a fact: no " wiſdom was here required [2]." Another of them ſays, it is *plain, that* Euſebius *was not diffident about the Miracle of raiſing the dead, related by* Papias, *nor ranks it among fables* [3]. I ſhall employ a few words therefore to clear up the ſtate of this fact.

Euſebius, in the chapter of his Hiſtory here referred to, ſets forth the particular character of *Papias* and his writings, of whom he ſays; " that he was a diligent collector of unwritten " traditions, which he gathered chiefly from thoſe Elders, " who had converſed with the Apoſtles; eſpecially from *John*,

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[1] p. 72.

[2] Ch. p. 185.

[3] p. 46.

“ *the Preſbyter, and Ariſtion:* and beſides theſe, he relates ſome
“ other wonderfull things on the authority of tradition; particularly
“ a ſtory reported to him by the daughters of *Philip*,
“ *of a dead perſon, who had been raiſed to life*; and another ſtory,
“ of *Juſtus*, ſurnamed *Barſabas*, who happened to drink a cup
“ of deadly poyſon, yet by the grace of God received no harm
“ from it. After which, he goes on to tell us, how *Papias*,
“ from the ſame ſource of unwritten tradition, had recorded
“ ſome ſtrange parables and doctrines of our Lord, and ſeveral
“ other *fabulous tales:* eſpecially that, of *a corporeal and ſenſual*
“ *millennium*, in which Chriſt was to reign with the Saints upon
“ this earth, for a thouſand years after the general reſurrection:
“ which he aſcribes to the miſtake and blunder of *Papias*,
“ who groſly and litterally interpreted, what the Apoſtles had
“ delivered in a typical or myſtical ſenſe. For *Papias*, ſays he,
“ was of *a very ſhallow underſtanding, as is evident from his writings*;
“ yet the greateſt part of the Eccleſiaſtical Writers or
“ Fathers, who ſucceded him, were led by his authority into
“ the ſame opinion, on account of the age of the man, as *Irenæus*
“ in particular, as well as every other writer, who aſſerts
“ the like doctrines [1].”

Now from this account let any unprejudiced man judge, whether *Euſebius* can be thought to have laid any ſort of ſtreſs on an *hearſay-ſtory*, as it was recorded by *Papias*, concerning a perſon unknown; who had been raiſed from the dead: and whether he does not put it upon the ſame rank, with all the other *ſtrange parables and tales*, which he mentions to have been delivered by the ſame weak man, and expreſly declares to be *fabulous*, μυθικώτερα; this at leaſt is certain, and ſufficient for my purpoſe; that after the character here given, *of the little under-*

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[1] Euſeb. p. 339.

ſtanding, and *great credulity of Papias*, no man of judgement will think his teſtimony of any weight in the preſent caſe; or venture to affirm, as Dr. *Church* has done, that *how weak ſoever he might be, he may ſtill be a good witneſs of ſuch a fact.* For all that can be allowed to ſuch a character is, that he may be a *very good believer of an hearſay-ſtory*; but to call him *a good witneſs* of it, is abſurd, and contradictory to the common ſenſe and experience of mankind.

But before I diſmiſs this inſtance of *Papias*, I ſhall juſt remind the Doctor once more, of what the learned Mr. *Millar*, his own favorite writer, has ſaid, concerning the credit of his teſtimony, in a ſimilar caſe of a quæſtionable fact. " Tho' many " of the Antients, ſays he, have given ſome ground for this " ſtory, yet it flows originally onely from *Papias*, called *Biſhop* " *of Hierapolis*, as cited by *Euſebius*, for *Papias*'s books are loſt. " But if they were extant; according to the ſame *Euſebius*, the " Author of them was but *a perſon of a mean character*; *a rude* " *ſimple and vain man, who believed and reported things upon common* " *tradition, even things, that were* μυθικώτερα, *liker to fables than* " *truths. He was a millenary, and introduced fabulous ſtories into* " *the Church, which a multitude of writers after him licked up* [1]."

Thus we ſee, how the character of *Papias* ſtands between theſe two Authors, Mr. *Millar*, and Dr. *Church*; men of the ſame principles; of the ſame reverence for the primitive Fathers; and writers after each other's own heart. Mr. *Millar*, being led by his argument, to combat the reality of a fact, which was ſupported chiefly by the teſtimony of *Papias*, frankly ſets forth the true character of the man, as it is repreſented by *Euſebius*, and ſhews him, to have been utterly void both of judgement and veracity, and unworthy therefore of any credit. Dr. *Church*, on the other hand, being engaged to defend a ſyſtem, where the teſtimony of *Papias* is of ſome little uſe to him, reſolves at all adventures to hold up his character, and how many lies ſoever may have been told, and fables invented by him, affirms him to be a *good witneſs*, even of a fact, which, of all others, is in its own nature, the moſt ſurprizing and incredible.

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[1] Millar, p. 280.

But to return to the Miracle, which we have been examining: it not onely ſtands, as we have ſhewn, upon the ſingle teſtimony of *Irenæus*, but I have ſhewn alſo, that this ſingle witneſs was of a character, on which we cannot reaſonably depend for the truth of a report ſo extraordinary. I have ſhewn him to be of ſo credulous, ſuperſtitious and enthuſiaſtical a turn of mind, as would diſpoſe him to embrace and aſſert any fabulous tale, which tended, as he thought, in any manner, to advance the credit of the Goſpel, or to confute an Heretic. That he has actually affirmed ſeveral facts, doctrines and traditions, as delivered down to him directly from the Apoſtles, which are allowed even by his advocates, to be abſolutely falſe and groundleſs: all which I have confirmed by ſuch clear and undeniable inſtances, as would utterly blaſt the credit of the moſt eſteemed and eminent writer now living. In ſhort, I have ſhewn him to be a ſecond *Papias*, whoſe ſcholar he was; and by whom, as *Euſebius* tells us, he was *impoſed upon, and drawn to believe, and teach thoſe ſpurious doctrines and traditions*, with which his writings abound, and which his authority continued to impoſe likewiſe upon the Fathers, who ſucceded him.

To theſe exceptions urged by me againſt the credibility of his teſtimony, our Champions have not attempted to give any particular anſwer: but ſince his authority muſt by all means be ſupported, or their argument would ſink at once, they affirm ſtill with one voice, that *his teſtimony is ſuperior to all exception*; and they lay it down as an indiſputable maxim; *that the poſitive evidence of a witneſs, ſo pious and ſo ſincerely devoted to the Chriſtian cauſe, muſt neceſſarily demand our belief in all Caſes, how extraordinary or incredible ſoever they may be in their own nature*: This is the general anſwer which they give to all objections of this kind; and on this maxim, as extravagant as it is, the merit of their cauſe and reaſoning is intirely grounded.

And now I cannot help flattering myſelf, that every ſenſible and unprejudiced reader will be of the ſame mind with me, with regard to the claim of this primary Miracle, as it is ſet forth by the teſtimony of *Irenæus*. For if a ſtrict and impartial examination can qualify me to form a proper judgement of it; or if I have any ability to diſtinguiſh between true and falſe; probable and improbable; I may ſafely pronounce, that there is not a grain of truth in it, nor a ſingle circumſtance belonging to it, which a *Free Inquirer*, or *a Free Anſwerer*, if he was ſincere, could juſtly think probable. As to my Antagoniſts, the impotence of their attempts to confute my argument is a ſtrong confirmation of the truth of it. While they defend theſe Miracles to be true, their very defences prove them to be falſe; and while they aſſume to themſelves the title of *Free Anſwerers*, their anſwers ſhew them to be ſlaves to ſyſtems, and liſted for the perpetual defence of received and eſtabliſhed opinions, whether true or falſe. Laſtly, ſince this is a point, on which, as Dr. *Dodwell* has obſerved, *great ſtreſs ought to be laid*; I here freely ſtake the whole merit and credit of my work upon it; and if this Miracle at laſt ſhould be adjudged to be true, ſhall quit the field to my adverſaries, and own myſelf unable, to prove any of the reſt to be falſe.

The gift of tongues alſo, as well as that of raiſing the dead, ſtands upon the ſingle teſtimony of *Irenæus*, without the leaſt notice or mention of it in any ſucceding writer through the three firſt centuries. I have offered ſeveral objections to the reality of it, ſufficient to expoſe the falſhood of that claim, which is made of it by *Irenæus*, and ſhall now conſider, what my Anſwerers have offered towards the confutation of thoſe objections. I cannot help obſerving however in the firſt place, how ignorant they were of the nature of this particular gift, till they had acquired ſome little inſight into it, from the peruſal of my work. Before the publication of my *Free Inquiry*, the Anſwerers of my Introductory Diſcourſe, affirm it to have been abſolutely neceſſary to the propagation of the Goſpel, and without which no ſucceſs could be expected; and urge that neceſſity as a ſure proof of it's continuance after the days of the Apoſtles, and conſequently, as a confutation of my general argument. And this indeed has ever been the univerſal ſenſe of all Divines, without exception, from our Archbiſhops down to our Vicars, as oft as they had occaſion to touch upon this ſubject in their Sermons or other Diſcourſes, of which I could produce many inſtances, but ſhall content myſelf with one for the preſent.

The late Biſhop *Burnet*, ſpeaking of the Romiſh miſſions of theſe later ages, among the remote and barbarous nations, ſays; " It is ſo ſublime a myſtery to think on God, and his attributes " and works: or to think of another ſtate, and the way, that " leads to it; that till God furniſhes out a new miſſion of Apo- " ſtles, with a meaſure of thoſe extraordinary gifts, which were " poured out on the great Pentecoſt, it is not eaſy to imagine " how the converſion of the Heathen nations ſhould be made. " And ſince the chief grounds on which we prove the Chriſtian "religion, are taken from the prophecies of the Old Teſta-"ment, and their accompliſhment in the New—to the *Barba-"rians*, who know nothing of this, and have no way of in-"forming themſelves concerning it, all this proof can ſignify "nothing.---So that in order to the convincing their under-"ſtandings---I do not ſee, how we ſhould expect, that they "ſhould yield eaſily, unleſs there were a new power of work-"ing Miracles, conferred on thoſe, who labor in it: for what "noiſe ſoever their Miſſionaries make, with their Miracles "in thoſe remote parts, it is plain, that theſe are all impoſ-"tures: for the moſt neceſſary of all Miracles for the conver-"ſion of ſtrange nations being *the Gift of tongues*, with which "the Apoſtles were furniſhed at firſt; and ſince they are all "forced to acknowledge, that this is wanting to them, we "have all poſſible reaſon to conclude, that God would not "change his method, or qualify men to work wonders, and "not give them that, which is both the moſt ſenſible and moſt "uſefull of all others, towards that end, for which he autho-"riſes them [1]."

This, I ſay, was the eſtabliſhed notion and character of this particular *gift of Tongues*, among all our Divines till the publication of *the Free Inquiry*. But ſince this has taught them, that, how neceſſary ſoever this Gift might be, it was either not continued to the Church after the Days of the Apoſtles, or withdrawn at leaſt within a generation or two after, we now find our Doctors in a quite different tone, from all who wrote before them; and as if the nature of this Miracle had been wholly changed at once, treating it, as of much leſs uſe, than any other Miracle, and aſſigning that, as the very reaſon, why it was one of the firſt, which God thought fit to recall.

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[1] Biſhop Burnet's Pref. to Lactant, p. 12, 13, 14, 15.

" It might be ſerviceable, ſays Dr. *Dodwell,* in the propagation " of the Goſpel, yet was the leaſt convincing of any to gain- " ſayers--- and could be no proof antecedently to the uncon- " verted. As ſoon as this uſe of it ceaſed, or was attainable " by human means, the ſupernatural gift itſelf ceaſed alſo, " and therefore ceaſed the firſt of any." " This gift, ſays " Dr. *Church,* would enable them to preach the Goſpel to peo- " ple of different nations, but would not evince the authority " of their miſſion. If this be allowed, we ſhall ſoon diſcern " the reaſon, why the gift of tongues might ceaſe before other " Miracles. When once a ſufficient number of converts was " made in any country, and inſtructed in the nature of our " religion, theſe or at leaſt the principal part of them, were " ordained, and ſent to teach their countrymen. And as they " wanted no gift of tongues, to enable them to do this, ſo we " have no reaſon to think, that God would continue ſuch a Mi- " racle any longer than was neceſſary: whereas theſe very per- " ſons might want and did want the aſſiſtance of other Mira- " cles then, not onely to confirm the word, but to ſupport them- " ſelves and others, who were eminent ſufferers for the truth [1]." Dr. *Dodwell* had given the very ſame reaſon before him, and muſt therefore have the honor of it. " When the Apoſtles, " ſays he, and others the firſt Martyrs of Chriſtianity, quali- " fied with this endowment, had once propagated the Goſpel, " and made converts in many places, the natives of thoſe " places were able to carry on the deſign, and without any " Miracle were qualified to teach their own countrymen, in the " ſeveral languages, wherein they were born [1]."

Thus we ſee, how readily they can dreſs up an hypotheſis, and apply it preſently as an allowed fact, to ſupport the opinion which they are defending. They ſuppoſe, that when the firſt and gifted Preachers of the Goſpel, had made a number of Converts in any barbarous country, they immediately left the whole care and adminiſtration of it, to thoſe barbarous Converts, who, by preaching the word to their countrymen in their own native language, ſuperſeded all farther uſe of *the gift of tongues.* A mere imaginary ſcheme, without the leaſt foundation in reaſon, hiſtory or experience! The Jewiſh converts indeed, who were previouſly inſtructed in all the main principles, on which Chriſtianity is founded, might ſoon become maſters of the myſtery of the Goſpel, and be qualified to teach it, as it was opened and explaned to them by their own ſcriptures. But to converts of barbarous nations and ſtrange languages, utterly unacquainted with every principle, which bore any relation either to Judaiſm or Chriſtianity, the caſe was quite different, and to acquire a competent knowledge of the Chriſtian doctrine muſt have been a work of much time and great difficulty, ſo as to be hardly attainable at all in any degree of perfection except to a very few. It is incredible therefore, that any of thoſe Barbarians, though converted to a general belief and profeſſion of faith in Chriſt, ſhould ever have been intruſted by the primitive planters of the Goſpel, with the important charge of converting the reſt of their country, by preaching it, and adminiſtering it's ſacred rites and offices. Nay, experience has evinced the contrary, and ſhewn that either no ſuch cuſtom had ever obtained, or that it was wholly fruitleſs and ineffectual from the very beginning; ſince in all the barbarous nations of the world, no footſtep has ever been diſcovered of any ſucceſſion of native Preachers, nor any remains indeed of Chriſtianity itſelf, though it is confidently affirmed to have been preached to them all. Nor have I ever read or heard, that any ſuch method has ever been practiſed, or thought to be practicable, by the Miſſionaries of theſe modern ages, for how great ſoever their harveſt may have been found, yet all the laborers in it have conſtantly been ſupplied from time to time from Chriſtian countries.

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[1] Ch. p. 74.

[2] Dod. p. 91.

The firſt care of all modern Miſſionaries, in qualifying themſelves for a due diſcharge of their miſſion, is by great ſtudy and pains to acquire a competent ſkill of the language of that country, to which they are deſtined, for without this, all their labors, they know, would be vain and fruitleſs. *Francis Xavier*, called *the Apoſtle of the Indies*, as I have elſewhere obſerved, complains in one of his letters, that he found himſelf to be nothing better than a mute ſtatue among the barbarians, till he had learnt the rudiments of their tongue. This previous uſe of the language, acquired by the modern Miſſionaries, anſwers the purpoſe of the gift of tongues in the primitive Miſſionaries; and the arts and ſciences with which they are commonly well furniſhed, ſupply the place of their Miracles. For in barbarous nations, whatever excedes that degree of power or ſkill in man, which they had ever ſeen exerted before, it will have the ſame effect as a miraculous gift, in exciting admiration, and a reverence to the perſons who perform it. Yet, with all theſe qualities and endowments, managed with the utmoſt art and dexterity of Jeſuitical policy, the whole, which the Romiſh Miſſions have been able to effect in *China*, where they have long had a ſort of eſtabliſhment, under the protection and encouragement of the Court itſelf, is, to compound the matter as it were between the two religions, by forming a motley ſort of worſhip out of the rites of them both, and humoring the genius of the country, ſo as to admit their *Confucius* to a partnerſhip of honor with *Jeſus* himſelf.

But let us return to the ſtate of the primitive Church, in which the *gift of tongues*, according to the opinion of all Divines, has ever been held the moſt neceſſary of all others to the propagation of the Goſpel. And this ſame neceſſity of it was ſo far from having been ſuperſeded in thoſe primitive ages, that it continued in it's full force through all the ſucceding ages, and appears to be as much wanted at this day, as it was in the very earlieſt days, as it is confirmed and declared by the experience of all Miſſionaries. It is ſurprizing then, that theſe two Miracles of raiſing the dead and of Tongues, ſo uſefull and important to the cauſe of the Goſpel, ſhould vaniſh of a ſudden and ceaſe together ſo early in the Chriſtian Church: and if one of them, as theſe Doctors contend, was withdrawn, becauſe it was no longer of any uſe; how will they account for the ceſſation of the other, which as themſelves own, continued ſtill to be uſefull and even neceſſary for thoſe new converts among the *Barbarians* whom they talk of, and to whom the preaching of the Goſpel was committed, tho' they had no occaſion for the gift of tongues, yet wanted, as they tell us, the aſſiſtance of other Miracles on many accounts? And none ſurely could be more ſerviceable to them, than that *of raiſing the dead*. On the whole then. After all the real difficulties, which are found on the one ſide, and all the evaſive ſhifts, which are offered on the other, what can we reaſonably think or ſay of theſe two Miracles, which are ſuppoſed to have been withdrawn, as ſoon almoſt as they were clamed, but what I have already intimated of one of them, that they never ſubſiſted at all after the days of the Apoſtles, but having been raſhly clamed by *Irenæus*, or impoſed upon him by others of more craft, yet found upon trial, too difficult to be maintained, were preſently laid aſide, and ſuffered to expire with their Author?

But I have offered one particular objection to the reality of this gift of Tongues, which I take to be of the greateſt weight, as it is expreſſed by me in the following words. "It is very "remarkable, that this primitive Biſhop, who aſcribes it ſo li"berally to others, appears to have been in great want of it "himſelf, for the propagation of the Goſpel in his own Dio"ceſe among the *Celtæ* or *Gauls*; where, as Dr. *Cave* inter"prets his words, *It was not the leaſt part of his trouble, that he* "*was forced to learn the language of the country, a rude and barba*"*rous dialect, before he could do any good upon them* [1]."

To this Dr. *Dodwell* anſwers, "that I mention this objection "in ſuch a manner, as betrays a conſciouſneſs, on my part, "that Dr. *Cave* had here made a miſtake, and ſaid more for "*Irenæus*, than ever he had ſaid for himſelf; yet becauſe it "ſounded for my purpoſe, I could not paſs it over [2]." And in the next page he adds; "Dr. *Middleton* did not chuſe to take "this interpretation upon himſelf, but leaves it upon Dr. *Cave*, "and we muſt place it among the *few overſights* of that excel"lent writer.---But if this be *a groſs miſtake*, and nothing to "his purpoſe, he makes an obſervation of his own, on this "head, which he thinks important."---Dr. *Church* anſwers alſo in the ſame ſtrain, and ſays; "Our Author aſſerts, that *Ire*"*næus* wanted this Miracle himſelf for the propagation of the "Goſpel among the *Gauls*---and Dr. *Cave* indeed ſays, that this "is plainly intimated by *Irenæus*, that he was forced to learn "the language of the country——but *Irenæus*'s words expreſs "onely, *that he was for the moſt part employed in a barbarous lan*"*guage* [3]."

For my own part, ſince my interpretations, how right and clear ſoever, are ſure to be ſuſpected and contradicted by all writers of the ſame zeal and genius with theſe Doctors, ſo I have always been glad, as oft as I have found it in my power, to confirm them by the teſtimony of ſome more favored Author, whoſe learning they admire, and whoſe principles and orthodoxy they reverence. This I have done in the preſent caſe, by ſheltering myſelf under the authority of Dr. *Cave*, a writer after their own hearts, and whoſe judgement is uſually deciſive with them in all caſes, and ought certainly to be ſo in this, where it appears to be unquæſtionably true. For in flat contradiction to theſe Doctors, I here affirm, that I was ſo far *from being conſcious of any miſtake made by Doctor* Cave, in his expoſition of *Irenæus*'s words, that it then appeared, and ſtill appears to me, as certain and demonſtrable, that he has given us the true meaning of them, and the onely one indeed, which they will bear.

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[1] Free Inq. p. 120. [2] Dod. p. 88. [3] Ch. p. 262.

This ſenſe however, tho' plain and obvious, is rejected by our Doctors, it does not ſuit with their ſcheme: and Doctor *Dodwell*, according to cuſtom, preſents us with the whole paſſage, and his own tranſlation of it, of which I ſhall here tranſcribe, as much as relates to our purpoſe. "But you will not "expect from us, *who reſide among the* Gauls, *and are chiefly engaged in a barbarous dialect*, any artificial compoſition of words, "which we have not learned; nor the force of an Orator, which "we have not aimed at, *&c.*" Now the words with which alone we are concerned, and on which the quæſtion wholly turns are theſe, ϗ περὶ βάρβαρον διάλεκτον τὸ πλεῖστον ἀσχολȣμένων, which Dr. *Dodwell* has rendered, *and are chiefly engaged in a barbarous dialect.* A tranſlation flat and inſipid, and carrying no diſtinct ſenſe or idea, which a reader will eaſily perceive: yet the words themſelves have a force in them, which evidently declares their proper meaning, and which I tranſlate thus; *you* *will not expect from me, who reſide among the* Celtæ, *and the greateſt part of whoſe leiſure is intirely employed, upon a barbarous dialect, any artificial compoſition of words,* &c.

Now the ſingle quæſtion ariſing from this paſſage is, *in what way could* Irenæus's *leiſure be ſo greatly occupied by this barbarous dialect?* to which Dr. *Dodwell* makes no other Anſwer but this, " If any man can find out in theſe words, *that* Irenæus " *was put to difficulties in learning the language of the* Gauls, he " will diſcover, what I cannot perceive is alluded to. The " words have no reference at all to that quæſtion; and if we " were to draw inferences from them, I think they would ra- " ther incline to the contrary [1]." Dr. *Church* is ſomewhat more explicit, and tells us, " that his leiſure may full as well " be underſtood to have been taken up *in uſing, and ſpeaking,* " *and writing a barbarous language, as in learning it.* Nay the " former, ſays he, is a better excuſe, and more to his pur- " poſe, than the other would have been, as continually con- " verſing in a rough and unpoliſhed language, is more apt to " ſpoil the ſtile, than the learning it [2]."

But nothing ſurely can be more weak and frivolous, than this account of the matter. To imagine, that *Irenæus*'s leiſure was taken up *by writing this barbarous dialect*, is quite ridiculous, for what can we ſuppoſe him to have written in it? Our Doctors perhaps would tell us, his Sermons; which they find a taſk of ſome trouble to themſelves: but theſe early Preachers had no ſuch cuſtom: were no ſlaves to the labor either of writing, or even compoſing them: they delivered with all ſimplicity, what they conceived upon the ſpot, and poured out thoſe leſſons of piety and Chriſtianity, which they themſelves practiſed, and were deſirous to infuſe into the people. Beſides; all the works, which *Irenæus* ever wrote for the public, and which remained after his death, are declared by all the Antients, to have been written in Greek: and the five books againſt Hereſies, his capital work, is ſtill extant in that language, which was his native tongue. So that his leiſure could not be ſo much taken up by writing the *Celtic* dialect; and much leſs could the mere uſe of ſpeaking it, or of preaching in it occaſionally to the people, engroſs ſo large a ſhare of it, as to be the occaſion of that difficulty, and continual employment to him, of which he ſeems to complain.

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[1] Dod. p. 89.

[2] Ch. p. 262.

But here, another quæſtion naturally occurs, in which the reader, by this time, may be impatient to be ſatisfied,---that is, *by what means* Irenæus *could acquire the uſe of this barbarous dialect, which gave him ſo much trouble?* On this head our Doctors are wholly ſilent: they do not chuſe to affirm directly, that it was infuſed into him *by inſpiration*; yet that is the thing, which they propoſe to inſinuate; ſince they have not ſuggeſted the leaſt intimation of any other way. But this notion of it's being the effect *of the gift of tongues* or *of inſpiration*, is abſolutely inconſiſtent with *Irenæus*'s own account of it. A dialect infuſed by God could not poſſibly create any difficulty to him, either in learning, ſpeaking or writing it, ſince the perfect uſe of it would be communicated at once, and it would flow from him as freely as his native tongue: much leſs can we imagine, that it would debaſe the purity of any other more valuable or uſefull language, of which he was previouſly poſſeſſed, ſince that would be a real injury to him, and while it inabled him to preach the Goſpel in one particular place, would render him leſs able to preach it with the ſame force in another.

To ſumm up this argument therefore in a few words. Since *Irenæus* expreſſly declares, that the greateſt part of his leiſure was employed upon a barbarous dialect: and the word *ἀσχολουμένων*, which he here uſes, implies a leiſure particularly devoted to litterary ſtudies; and ſince he intimates at the ſame time, that his continual attention to this dialect had diſqualified him in ſome degree from writing with any elegance in the Greek tongue, it is impoſſible, that he could be ſpeaking of any language inſpired into him, or of any thing elſe, but of the neceſſity, which he was under of learning this rude dialect, to which he was an utter ſtranger, by his own pains and ſtudy: a taſk of much time and labor, and what would not onely create infinite trouble to him, before he could acquire a free uſe of it, but would naturally corrupt his ſtile and manner of writing in any other language. And thus, after all the ſilly cavils and evaſive ſhifts of theſe anſwerers, Dr. *Cave*, we find, has given us the true interpretation of this paſſage, where he tells us, *that it was not the leaſt part of* Irenæus's *trouble, that he was forced to learn the language of the* Celtæ, *a rude and barbarous dialect, before he could do any good upon them* [1].

I have dwelt the longer on this article, becauſe all my antagoniſts inſiſt, that theſe very Fathers, who atteſt the miraculous gifts of their ſeveral ages, were, above all other Chriſtians, the moſt eminently indued with them, tho' they themſelves make not the leaſt claim to them, but aſcribe them always, either *to the Chriſtian people* in general, or *to mean and illiterate laymen, women and boys.* For theſe Advocates of the miraculous gifts are very ſenſible, that it would go a great way towards deſtroying the general claim of them, if, while the loweſt of the Chriſtians are affirmed to have poſſeſſed them in a large meaſure, *the Martyrs, Paſtors, and Biſhops* of the Church ſhould appear to have been in want of them, even for the neceſſary diſcharge of their paſtoral functions; for which reaſon they attempt, as far as they are able, to invalidate the credit of this fact, or to elude the force of it at leaſt, by ſeveral different expedients.

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[1] Cave, p. 120.

Dr. *Dodwell* obſerves, how in a teſtimony, which I have cited from *Irenæus*, it is ſaid, " *that all, who were true Diſciples of* " *Chriſt, wrought Miracles in his name*; in which character *Ire-* " *næus* himſelf, and the reſt of the primitive writers before " him muſt be included;—and that there was a plain reaſon " why they ſhould uſually lay the ſtreſs on the meaneſt people, " as working them, not as excluding their ſuperiors, but be- " cauſe the mention of theſe, who were the leaſt capable of " craft and fraud, muſt be moſt convincing to Gainſayers— " then he adds what he calls the true reaſon, why the Primi- " tive Fathers did not mention themſelves on this head, which " really was, to avoid any oſtentation, and to do the greater " honor to Chriſtianity, by ſhewing, that the meaneſt of the " Chriſtian profeſſors had the ſame gifts, when they happened " to have any conteſt with the Heathens [1]." Dr. *Church* alſo, according to cuſtom, entertains us with the ſame ſtory, and ſays; " that tho' ſome of theſe powers are repreſented as common to " Chriſtians in general, yet we may eaſily apprehend, that they " were more eminently vouchſafed to the Paſtors and Governors " of the Church, who were under the greateſt difficulty, and " to whom the buſineſs of converting the Heathen world pecu- " liarly belonged [2]." " And if God was pleaſed to commu- " nicate ſuch divine gifts at that time to any perſons for the " benefit of the Church, he would favor theſe principal perſons

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[1] Dod. p. 47, 51.

[2] Ch. p. 110.

" with them. Some indeed are ſaid to have been imparted even " to private Laymen. But 'tis hard to think, while theſe poſ-" ſeſſed them, that the Biſhops and Martyrs of the Church " ſhould be without them, and that thoſe who ſucceded the " Apoſtles, in the great work of propagating the Goſpel, did " not alſo ſuccede them in being favored with Miracles. And " the reaſon, as he imagines, why none of theſe venerable " Saints made any pretenſion to them, either for themſelves or " the Apoſtolic Fathers before them, was the mere Effect of " their modeſty and humility, and *to avoid the very appearance of* " *vanity and oſtentation* [1]."

But from this ſingle paſſage, which I have been examining, all this refined reaſoning is overturned at once; for it clearly informs us, that *Irenæus*, tho' he affirms this gift of tongues to have been common in his days, and *that he had heard many ſpeaking all kinds of languages in the Church*, was himſelf ſtill deſtitute of it, tho' the Biſhop and leader of them all, and obliged with great difficulty to learn *the barbarous dialect of the* Celtæ, among whom he reſided, before he could do any good upon them, or was qualified to propagate the Goſpel in his own Dioceſe. Our Doctors however, tho' they think it neceſſary at preſent to deny this fact; yet being aware, that they may be driven at laſt to own it as true, ſeem to be providing a ſort of retreat beforehand, by changing their tone, and reducing their anſwers to a pitch more conformable to ſuch a conceſſion: for after all which they have been alledging, to prove theſe Fathers to have been chiefly inſtructed with the Miraculous Powers of the Church, it is pleaſant to obſerve, with what eaſe and calmneſs, Dr. *Church* ſeems prepared to give it all up again: for ſpeaking to this very point *of* Irenæus's *want of the gift of tongues,* he treats it as a thing of no importance, nor worthy of our *inquiry*, *whether he wanted it or not:* and *if the whole difficulty* were granted, and *Irenæus* allowed to have been deſtitute of it; *it could not amount*, he ſays, *to an objection, nor overthrow his poſitive teſtimony*, that ſuch a power was really ſubſiſting in the Church, and indulged to many other perſons, wholly obſcure and unknown [1]."

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[1] Ch. p. 116, 117.

And now after an impartial review and compariſon of all, that has been alledged in this controverſy, on the one ſide or the other, I have laid before the reader the genuin ſtate of three miraculous gifts, the moſt important, and uſeful of any, which were clamed by the primitive Church. It will be needleſs therefore to trouble myſelf with the examination of any more of them; ſince the reſt, as our Doctors themſelves will allow, muſt follow the fate of theſe three, and all of them ſtand or fall together; as being all built upon the ſame foundation, and ſupported by the ſame evidence. But in the article of healing the ſick, ſince Dr. *Dodwell* ſeems to lay a ſingular ſtreſs on one particular Miracle, and the clear atteſtation which is given to it by *Tertullian*, I ſhall juſt add a word or two, which may help to illuſtrate the true nature of it.

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[2] Ch. p. 263.

A

PREFACE

To an intended

ANSWER

To all the

OBJECTIONS

Made againſt the

FREE INQUIRY.

PREFACE.

IT was eaſy to foreſee, that the publication of my *Free Inquiry* would preſently raiſe up againſt me, *as my Introductory Diſcourſe* had done before, many fierce Adverſaries, with Anſwers and confutations of it, charging me with deſperate deſigns, and pernicious conſequences; with calumniating the Holy Fathers; miſrepreſenting their teſtimonies; and ſtraining them to ſenſes quite different from their own. For this is no more, than what I had reaſon to expect, from the very nature of my work; the purpoſe of which is, to extirpate an inveterate opinion, which has ever been held up by the authority of the Clergy, and obtains credit at this day, in every Church, and ſect of Chriſtians whatſoever.

Opinions of this kind, poſſeſſed of the public belief, and thought to be connected with the public religion, neceſſarily create many ſtrong prejudices in their favor, and many motives of different kinds, for the perpetual ſupport and defence of them; ever ready to give the alarm, againſt all free inquiry, and to excite a clamor againſt the Inquirer, from all, who had ever preached them from the pulpit, or maintained them from the preſs; all, who thought them true, or found them uſeful to their eaſe, their authority, or their fortunes: whoſe reſentment on ſuch occaſions will always be more ſtrong, in proportion, as the opinions in diſpute happen to be weak and likely to be diſgraced by the trial.

It was impoſſible therefore, that my argument could be received with indifference in this inquiſitive nation, unleſs the incapacity of the author to illuſtrate and adorn it, had expoſed it to the neglect of men of taſt and politeneſs. But ſince the approbation, which it has met with, gives me reaſon to think, that I have not greatly failed in that part: and ſince the truth or at leaſt the high probability of it is loudly acknowledged by all diſintereſted readers; I do not know how to account for that virulence of zeal, with which it is oppoſed ſtill by the generality of theſe writers, but by imputing it to their prejudices, or habitual bigottry, or to ſome motive eſpecially of intereſt, which, of courſe, barrs all entrance to opinions, though ever ſo probable, if not ſtamped by an authority, which can ſweeten them with rewards.

For to what other principle can we aſcribe, that uniform and perpetual contradiction, which they give to every ſingle article of the Free Inquiry? Some of them do not ſcruple to declare, *that there is not the leaſt pretence to any ſort of evidence*; *nor ſo much as the ſhadow of an argument in the whole work:* others, though they allow one or two things perhaps *to be plauſible*, yet treat them preſently as bubbles, and blow them at once into air, as void of all ſolidity: nay, they turn my whole argument ſo ſtrongly againſt me, as to make it prove the very contrary, to what I propoſed to eſtabliſh by it. Inſtead of diminiſhing the credit of the Fathers, they affirm it to be *a clear vindication of their honor*; and inſtead of expoſing *their credulity*, *to be a proof onely of my own:* inſtead of demonſtrating *the ceſſation of the primitive miracles*, they call it *a demonſtration of their continuance*; and inſtead of *ſerving the intereſts of Proteſtantiſm*, *the ſtrongeſt temptation in the world to make men Papiſts:* in ſhort, they profeſs to find nothing elſe in my book, from one end of it to the other, but a ſucceſs of *downright forgeries and falſifications*.

Now what inſtruction can we expect, in a quæſtion of this importance, from anſwerers, ſo void of candor; who, with a ſolemn air and pretext of religion, can offer ſuch an inſult to the common ſenſe of every reader? For, notwithſtanding all their confident aſſertions, it is certain, that nothing can be made more evident by any book, than theſe two points are, by the Free Inquiry: firſt, that the Facts and teſtimonies produced in it, muſt neceſſarily *detract ſomewhat, from the characters of the Fathers, and the implicit faith, which has been given to them in their reports of the primitive miracles:* ſecondly, that the general argument of it *ſtrikes at the very root of Popery*, and muſt conſequently be fatal to it, wherever it may happen to be received in any Chriſtian country.

But let the bigotted, the intereſted, or the powerfull exert themſelves as much as they pleaſe, it is a truth confirmed to us by the experience of all ages, that all the opinions, which now reign in the world, how ſtrongly ſoever eſtabliſhed, or how antient ſoever they may be; if not grounded originally on nature, but on the conſent onely and contrivance of men, will be ſure in the end, to find the ſame fate with old buildings: which, while they acquire a ſort of veneration to themſelves from their very age, are every day gradually weakened and inſenſibly conſumed by that ſame age; till being found at laſt rotten and ruinous, they are demoliſhed, by common conſent, as unable, either to ſtand, or to be ſupported any longer. Such will be the fate of the opinion, now defended by my Antagoniſts: for the fullneſs of time ſeems to be come, or at leaſt to be nearly approaching, when we may be allowed to laugh without offence at the pious frauds of the antient Fathers, and add the ſtories of their miracles to that numerous liſt of impoſtures; to thoſe *Oracles, Auguries, Divinations, Magic, Witches*, &c. which have all floriſhed in their turns, and triumphed over the ſenſes and reaſon of men, in every age and nation of the world.

This I may now augurate, with the greater aſſurance, not onely from the conſciouſneſs of my own conviction, grounded on an impartial inquiry into the caſe, but from the apparent weakneſs and impertinence of all the ſeveral Anſwers which have been publiſhed in contradiction to it. For tho' many things are urged in them with great confidence, which, to readers of little learning, may ſeem to charge me with ignorance or blunders or even willfull miſrepreſentation, all which I ſhall wipe off at once, whenever I find occaſion to touch upon them; yet there is not a ſingle argument in them all, which can reaſonably be thought to invalidate, or in any degree to weaken the capital poſition of my book. So that, after all the violence of this attack, I find myſelf at liberty to affirm ſtill, with the ſame conviction, what I affirmed originally in my Title page; *That we have no ſufficient reaſon to believe, upon the authority of the Primitive Fathers, that any miraculous powers were continued to the Church, after the days of the Apoſtles.*

Such an affirmation indeed from me, may juſtly be thought exceptionable; who am too much intereſted in the quæſtion, to be conſidered as an equal Judge in it: but beſides the confirmation, which it has received from the general voice of my readers, the public has ſeen a proof of it, ſuperior to all exception, from the generous labors of two or three Clergymen, who, after a ſtrict examination of the merits of eaſe cauſe, have taken the pains to ſhew, by a ſtrong and maſterly force of reaſoning, that the argument, both of *the Introductory Diſcourſe*, and of *the Free Inquiry*, remains unhurt and unſhaken, by all the ſtudied cavils and ſubtil objections, which the moſt expert and zealous of my Adverſaries have been able to alledge againſt it.

The perſons, whom I mean, are utter ſtrangers to me; and cannot be ſuppoſed therefore to have written out of any partial or perſonal regard to me; nor from any other motive indeed, but a ſincere love of truth; ſince nothing elſe could have force enough to engage Clergymen in the defence of an opinion, openly decried and diſgraced by thoſe ſuperiors through whoſe hands the rewards and honors of their profeſſion are chiefly diſtributed. For though the cauſe of the Free Inquiry, be the cauſe of Proteſtantiſm itſelf, and what, above all things, tends to unite it's divided ſects, and to ſtrengthen it's common intereſts; yet, by a ſort of policy not eaſy to be accounted for, the inſinuations of a few peeviſh, narrow-minded, bigotted Churchmen have had weight enough to render it ſuſpected and odious to the leaders of this free and proteſtant State.

It is not my deſign, in the preſent work, to enter into a minute diſcuſſion of the objections which may be found in all, or in any indeed, of the ſeveral anſwers to my Free Inquiry, but to ſelect ſuch onely as ſeem to be worthy of any notice, or to carry any weight with them: and ſince the two Doctors, Dodwell and Church, appear to be the moſt applauded and relied upon by all, who profeſs any zeal for the cauſe which they defend, it ſhall be my chief buſineſs, to examine the merit of their performances, not omitting at the ſame time, to pay due reſpect to the reſt, wherever I find them applying either the ſame argument with any new force, or a different one, which may afford any opportunity either of inſtruction or entertainment to the reader.

But before I deſcend to the examination of theſe particulars, it may be of uſe towards illuſtrating the general quæſtion, to premiſe a few obſervations on the preſent ſtate of it, and to conſider, how it now ſtands, after the correction, which it has received from the hands of theſe Inquiſitors.

I. One of the objections, which I at firſt propoſed to the reality of the Primitive Miracles, was this; that none of our writers, who maintained the continuance of them beyond the days of the Apoſtles, had ever been able to ſettle the bounds between true and falſe miracles, or to mark out, by any probable rule, the exact time when the true ceaſed, and the falſe began. So that a ſerious Inquirer into primitive antiquity muſt ever be perplexed with this doubt, that the pious reverence, which he comes diſpoſed to pay to the ſuppoſed interpoſition of God, in this or that pretended inſtance of it, may be nothing elſe but the effect of credulity and ſuperſtition, and a criminal compliance with the frauds and fictions of men.

My Antagoniſts are very ſenſible of this difficulty; and have all in their turns, attempted to give ſome ſolution of it: but the vanity of their attempts, inſtead of removing, has confirmed it onely the more, and ſhewn it to be inexplicable. For example; Mr. Jackſon, who appeared the firſt, aſſerts the continuance of the miraculous powers no farther than to the time of *Origen*; by which he intimates his ſuſpicion, of one half at leaſt of the third Century. The ſecond, an Anonymous Letter-writer, defends the ſubſiſtence of them, to the end of that century. Yet, even before that time, while he ſuppoſes the Church to be guided and guarded ſtill by all it's miraculous powers, he declares it to have been greatly degenerated from it's original purity. Dr. Church confines his defence alſo to the three firſt centuries; not meddling with any miracles of a later date; nor yet determining, as he ſays, *on the one ſide or the other, either for their truth or their falſehood*; but ſuppoſing, that among *the many fabulous accounts of the ſucceding ages, there might be a mixture ſtill of ſome which were genuin.* Dr. Dodwell conſiders the three firſt Centuries in general, as the proper period of true miracles, yet thinks it neceſſary ſtill, to take in ſome ſhare alſo of the fourth, as far as to the eſtabliſhment of Chriſtianity by the civil power; and for the reſt, contents himſelf by ſaying; *that many wonderful works might probably be wrought afterwards for ſome great ends.* Mr. Whiſton alone has ventured to launch out beyond the middle of this century; taking every thing for Goſpel, that he meets with in the Church, till *the hereſy of Athanaſius*, as he calls it, by corrupting the pure ſtream of it's faith, provoked God to withdraw his gifts, and give it up to the wiles and deluſions of *Satan*. Mr. Brooke, the laſt, and moſt voluminous of all theſe anſwerers, after a full deliberation on what the reſt had ſeverally offered, ſeems to prefer the opinion of the firſt, in reſtraining the period of undoubted miracles *to the days of Origen:* for though he declares them to have been withdrawn *between the time of Origen and Chryſoſtom*; yet he ſignifies his ſuſpicion of all, which are later than the firſt, and affirms all to have been certainly forged, which are atteſted by the laſt of thoſe Fathers.

This difficulty then, about fixing the æra of the miraculous powers, continues ſtill in it's full force, as a ſort of preſumptive argument, againſt the reality of any ſuch powers after the days of the Apoſtles. But my Antagoniſts, after all their pains, to account for it, finding it at laſt a clog upon their ſyſtem, which they are unable to remove, content themſelves by diſmiſſing it with an air of contempt, and declaring it, to be of no conſequence at all; whereas if their hypotheſis be admitted, that true and falſe miracles were promiſcuouſly ſubſiſting in the primitive ages, till the true happened, we know not when, nor how, to be finally withdrawn, nothing can be more certain, than that it would be of the greateſt moment to us, to be able to ſeparate the one from the other. For as true miracles muſt ever be wrought for ſome great and beneficial end, and the falſe on the contrary for ſome crafty and ſelfiſh ends; ſo the one would lead us of courſe to a religion worthy of God; the other into error and ſuperſtition, and a worſhip conſequently offenſive to him. But let us conſider a little the nature of this hypotheſis, which theſe Champions here maintain. They ſuppoſe, that true and falſe miracles were indiſcriminately wrought at the ſame time, and in the ſame Church, without any rule of diſcerning the one from the other, till the true ceaſed, and the falſe prevailed: and that the Church continued ever after in that ſtate, the perpetual dupe of falſe miracles, down to the time of the reformation. But nothing ſurely can be more abſurd, than to imagine, that there ever was, or ever could be any ſuch jumble and concurrence of true and falſe miracles in any age, or that the falſe eſpecially ſhould beat out the true, and the craft of the Devil ſuperſede the power of God. For whatever coloring they may give to their hypotheſis, and in what ſolemn words ſoever they may cloath it, that is the genuin conſequence of it. Mr. Whiſton indeed expreſſes it by ſaying; *that the forgeries of Athanaſius by their prevalence in the Church provoked God to withdraw his miraculous powers,* and give it up to the deluſions of Satan: yet the fact is the ſame, as it is affirmed by them all, that after an indiſcriminate ſubſiſtence, or ſtruggle as it were of true and falſe miracles, through a century or two, the true inſenſibly expired and the falſe onely remained. The abſurdity of which notion, as it naturally flows from the cauſe which they defend, muſt yield a ſtrong preſumption in favor of my opinion, that, after the days of the Apoſtles, the miraculous pretenſions of the ſucceding ages, were all of the ſame kind; contrived by the craft of a few, and impoſed upon the credulity of the many.

2. The reader will remember, that when I publiſhed *the Introductory Diſcourſe*, I found our Divines, who were chiefly intruſted

ed with the defence of our religion, againſt Infidels and Heretics, frankly aſſerting the continuance of the miraculous powers, not onely to the fourth, but to the fifth and ſixth centuries, and ranking them all upon a level, with the very earlieſt after the days of the Apoſtles. My view therefore in that treatiſe, was to expoſe the extravagance of that bigottry; and give a check to the prevalence of principles, which are abſolutely fatal to the Proteſtant cauſe: and my attempt has had this clear effect, not onely of putting to ſhame and ſilence the raſhneſs of thoſe zealots, whom I then particularly attacked, but of making their ſucceſſors in the preſent cauſe, ſo cautious and ſhy as we now ſee them, of touching even upon the fourth century. So that, if Dr. Chapman ſhould once more think fit, to undertake the defence of Symeon Stylites, and his miracles, upon the illuſtrious authority of the Great Theodoret; or ſhould a ſecond *Berriman* affirm the divinity of that Creed, ſaid to be delivered from heaven *by the Virgin Mary, to Gregory, the wonder-worker*; or inſiſt again on the credibility of thoſe Monkiſh tales, which are related *of Pope Gregory, the Great*, they would be hiſſed off the ſtage, even by their old friends; as the advocates of a ſuperſtition, too groſs to deſerve a moment's attention. Here then we ſee one great and manifeſt advantage actually gained to the Proteſtant cauſe, by the argument of the Free Inquiry; in clearing us at once, from the greateſt part of that incumbrance which had hitherto clogged and blunted the vigor of our defence againſt Rome. For out of four ſucceſſive centuries, to which the Divines of this Proteſtant Church were roundly aſcribing all the kinds of miraculous gifts, and leading us inſenſibly into the very depths of Popery; the Free Inquiry, by the confeſſion of all it's adverſaries, has now freed us from the Impoſtures of two of them, or if we reckon to the time of Origen, of two and an half: and

I make no doubt, but that, in the iſſue of this controverſy, it will free us in the ſame manner, from the reſt, how averſe ſoever their advocates may be, to give them up, and whatever clamor they may raiſe about the conſequences.

Since my Antagoniſts, who appear to have known nothing of the ſtate of the primitive miracles, but what they learnt from my book, which they now pretend to confute, have not yet learnt from it a right notion of the point in diſpute between us: The poſition, which I affirm, is this; that after the days of the Apoſtles, no miraculous powers were continued to the Church, or the particular members of it, as a ſtanding proof of the truth of the Goſpel, to which they might perpetually appeal for the conviction of the Heathens. This is what the Title of my work implies; what my whole reaſoning turns upon; and what I have often ſignified in the courſe of it, to be my preciſe meaning. Yet theſe anſwerers treat my argument, as if it abſolutely rejected every thing miraculous, whether that within the Church, by the agency of men, or any other occaſions by the immediate hand of God. That God can work miracles, whenever he thinks fit, no body, I dare ſay, will deny: but whether he has wrought any or not, ſince the days of the Apoſtles, is an inquiry which I do not meddle with; the ſingle point, which I maintain, is, *that the Primitive Church had no ſtanding power of working any.* This diſtinction was ſeen at once by thoſe writers, who have appeared in the defence of my argument; and who have juſtly reproved theſe Antagoniſts for their neglect of it, as being neceſſary to a right management of the controverſy, as well as obvious to every reader [1]. Yet in defiance of this public admonition, we find them ſtill declaring it, to be a mere evaſion and ſubterfuge, never intended by me at firſt, but an after thought, contrived to elude the force of ſome objections, which were found to preſs me [1].

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[1] Toll. 29. Lett. Def. 16.

But tho' the diſtinction be juſt and clear, my view in marking it out, was not to derive any advantage from it to my cauſe, for I knew none, which it could give, but merely to ſhorten the diſpute, and prevent impertinent wranglings, on facts and inſtances, which have no relation to it: and it is certain that, if a due regard had been paid to it, it would have ſaved my anſwerers ſome trouble in ſeveral inſtances of that ſort; and eſpecially in the ſtory of *Polycarp*'s martyrdom, on which they all now procede to exert their utmoſt pains and zeal, in defending the miracles, which are aſcribed to it, as if they were deciſive, and utterly ſubverſive of the main poſition of my book: whereas in truth whatever be the real character of them, may be, they are nothing to the purpoſe, as being neither wrought by any ſtanding power in the Church, nor carrying any evidence, that any ſuch power was then ſubſiſting in it.

But if theſe miracles have no relation, as I ſay, to the preſent diſpute, it is aſked, for what reaſon then did I introduce them into it? To which I anſwer, that it was for no other, than to expoſe the trifling and frivolous nature of them, and to ſhew, how fondly the Chriſtians were diſpoſed, in this very early and pious age, to give a miraculous turn to every unuſual incident, which might happen to take place, on any important and affecting occaſion. **********

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[1] Ch. Pref. 8, 9.

ORATIO
DE NOVO
Phyſiologiæ Explicandæ
MUNERE,
EX
Celeberrimi WOODWARDI Teſtamento
INSTITUTO:

Habita CANTABRIGIÆ in Scholis Publicis a
CONYERS MIDDLETON, S.T.P.
Academiæ Cantabrigienſis Protobibliothecario & Lectore
ibidem WOODWARDIANO.

ORATIO

De NOVO

PHYSIOLOGIÆ EXPLICANDÆ

MUNERE, &c.

CUM res præclarè geſtæ, aut ad communem utilitatem ſapienter inſtitutæ, apud omnes ferè gentes, ſolenni hominum cœtu ludiſque celebrari, & poſteritatis memoriæ commendari ſolerent; tum muneris hodierno die inſtituti dignitas, quæ hunc doctorum virorum conventum frequentiamque congregavit, id etiam meritò flagitare videtur, ut non ſine publicâ quâdam gratulatione jam primùm ſuſcipiatur, & ad ſempiterna literarum commoda ſolenni oratione conſecretur. Nam ſi honoribus artes aluntur, & ſi ab artium literarumque gloriâ Academiæ noſtræ vitam ſpiritumque ducunt, nihil ſanè Academicis lætabilius, nihil gratulatione dignius accidere poteſt, quàm præmia literarum ſtudiis alendis publicè aſſignata.

Quamobrem gratulari vobis imprimis liceat nova hæcce Almæ Matri addita ornamenta; novos hoſce, quibus ipſe nunc fungor, honores: non enim meos eſſe putetis, quòd ad me primùm delatos cernitis; veſtri ſunt, Academici; vobis in commune propoſiti; veſtrumque certè aliquis hos ipſos laborum ſuorum fructus poſthac percipiet; me propterea doctior, digniorque, quod hoc jam præmio conſtituto, atque hâc tantâ ſcientiæ ſupellectile comparatâ, ſtudio & meditatione inſtructior accedat neceſſe ſit.

Opinionem quandam apud homines doctos eſſe ſentio, doctrinæ artiumque bonarum ſtudia hebeſcere per hoſce annos & languere cœpiſſe: idque iniquæ noſtrorum temporum conditioni, factionibuſque iſtis, quæ Rempublicam tam diu vexârunt, adſcribendum plerique cenſent; quibus juventus noſtra infecta penitus atque imbuta, non doctrinâ ſeſe ornare, non artibus inſtruere curat, niſi eis, quibus ad honores, Magnorumque gratiam viam ſibi muniri cernit, partium ſcilicet, non literarum ſtudiis.

Ego verò crediderim potius, Academici, veterem iſtum ſtudiorum ardorem idcirco jam paulatim deferbuiſſe, quòd artes ferè omnes noſtrorum hominum ingeniis ita elaboratæ & excultæ & ad illud quaſi culmen & faſtigium evectæ ſunt, ut nullos ultra progreſſus capere poſſe videantur: ita ut præ gloriæ fructûſque aſſequendi deſperatiòne, operæque & temporis perdendi metu, curſum multi inſtitutum omittere, aliamque ſibi vitæ & fortunarum viam inveſtigare cogantur. Artiumque adeò Victrix Alma Mater, literarum penitus orbe peragrato, otio ferè languida & mœſta, ſortem jam ſuam deflere videtur, quòd nihil ultra reſtet debellandum, nec alia ſcientiarum regio peragranda.

At ecce Vobis novus jam tandem Orbis commonſtratus! novi Scientiæ campi patefacti! & digni illi quidem, quibus in colendis induſtriam ingeniumque veſtrum exerceatis, cùm tot eruditionis inſtrumenta, tantam Studiorum novorum materiem, in hoc literarum emporium importari inde videatis.

Has nobis regiones, tantis frugibus fœtas, divitiis refertas aperuit, *Woodwardus*; & ad eum finem aperuit, ut hac præmiorum ubertate invitati in noſtram illas ditionem redigeremus. Haud aliter populorum duces, quas ſibi terras ſubigendas, occupandaſque deſtinaverant, earum terrarum fruges, merceſque publicè exponere ſolitos accepimus, quo ſtudium ſuis animoſque ad labores perferendos adjungerent.

Woodwardi autem nomen, cujus tanta in nos beneficia hodierno die celebramus, ad ſeſe orationem meam vocat, & de laudibus ejus prædicandis admonet. Nihil enim æquius, quàm cujus ex liberalitate hoc ipſum dicendi munus ortum atque originem duxerit, ut ab eo potiſſimùm ornando dicendi etiam materiem argumentumque ducamus.

Hunc laudis & gloriæ fructum illuſtria clarorum virorum facta tanquam mercedem requirunt; non tam mortuorum famæ debitam, quàm viventium utilitati accommodatam, quò nos aliorum laudibus, quaſi gloriolæ ſtimulis admotis, ad virtutes eorum aſſequendas concitemur.

De homine verò tam celebri, tam ab omnibus cognito, & in urbe ampliſſimâ, oculiſque civium vitam omnem degente, quid omnino novi & inauditi proferri poterit? Quid, in quo non Vos ipſi dicentis vocem prævenire & antevertere queatis? Etenim ſi, quod de Medico ante omnia prædicandum, de Medicinæ ſcientiâ & laude ejus præſtanti dicerem; at quis ignorat, *Woodwardi* nomen inter ſummos Artis Profeſſores principem ſemper locum obtinuiſſe? multoſque hoc ipſo tempore ſupereſſe novimus, qui quod vivant valeantque *Woodwardo* ſe uni debere profitentur.

Si, quod nos potiſſimùm commovere debet, Doctrinam ejus excellentem multiplicemque celebrarem; at ſcripta ejus, omnium manibus trita, omniumque pene in linguas converſa, illam jam diu demonſtrant.

Si, quod hujuſce diei celebritas poſtulare maximè videatur, Liberalitatem ejus animique magnitudinem commemorarem; at hoc ipſum munus, quo jam fungor, illud omne vel me tacente declararet; atque hæc noſtra Academia ſempiternum munificentiæ ejus monumentum extabit.

In his autem egregiis *Woodwardi* virtutibus, quas omnibus notas, & cum nonnullis etiam communes habuit; habuit tamen in ſingulis ita proprium ſuum quiddam & peculiare, ut quiſquis illo familiariter uſus eſſet, novam facilè & præcipuam laudis materiem elicere inde poſſit.

In Medicinâ enim nonnulla, ſi non ab eo inventa, at auctoritate ejus commendata, & in communem uſum recepta, magni ad vitam hominum conſervandam momenti eſſe repeTiuntur. Ingenio autem uti in omnibus eleganti erat, & polito, ſic præſcripta ſua ita temperanda ſemper & adminiſtranda curavit, ut vim ſuam non certiùs modò citiúſque obtinerent, ſed ut nauſeæ ſimul minus & faſtidii ægris & languentibus darent. Quod verò maximum eſt; non artem ſuam ad ambitionem avaritiamve accommodare; non magnorum gratiam divitumque copias obſequiis captare; ſed pauperibus potiùs opem benevolam & gratuitam præbere ſolebat.

Vidi ego, Academici, fores ejus, tanquam Æſculapii quoddam veſtibulum, debilium turbâ refertas; quibus ſi vires modò ſuppeterent, ut ejus in conſpectum venirent, de reditu parum cogitâſſe videntur; tantam in eo uno valetudinis recuperandæ ſpem fiduciamque poſuerant. Nec ſpes quidem illos ſæpe fefellit; nam tantâ ille omnes tum patientiâ tum comitate excepit, quaſi non curare ſolum, ſed placere etiam ægris ſtuduiſſet; nullâ ſibi laboris mercede propoſitâ, niſi quam animi conſcientia ſuppeditaret; & vel rei ipſius famam comprimere cupiiſſet, ni famam iſtam plures ad ſe ægrotos invitaturam,

turam, pluresque adeò benefaciendi occaſiones daturam ſibi ſperâſſet. Haud mirum igitur, quod quibus artibus Æſculapius in Cœleſtium numerum evectus fuerit, iiſdem *Woodwardus* miſeris hiſce quaſi præſens quidam Deus haberetur.

Doctrinam autem ſuam non Artis ſuæ anguſtiis terminavit; neque eâ contentus fuit, quæ ad ſummi Medici famam ſatis eſſet, niſi omnem iſtam cognitionis & ſcientiæ ferè infinitatem animo comprehendere ac complecti potuiſſet. Quoties eum in Bibliothecâ ſuâ, quam inſtructiſſimam habuit, de Artium omnium ſtudiis ita diſputantem audivi, ac ſi diſputandi copiâ & ubertate vel librorum ſuorum copiam varietatemque adæquare conaretur? Ita tamen de ſingulis eruditè; ac ſi in arte illâ, de quâ diſſerebat, enutritus, eamque unicè profeſſus eſſet? In rerum autem Romanarum cognitione tam curioſè verſatus eſt; ut me, qui huic ipſi rei non operæ certè parum ſtudiique dediſſem, quique Romæ etiam fuiſſem, ab homine occupato, aliudque agente, tantopere ſuperari non tam moleſtè quidem ferre, quàm mirari ſolerem.

Quicquid verò in reliquis ſtudiis profecerit; in Phyſicâ certè neminem ſui ſimilem paremve habuit: eam autem velim Phyſicæ partem, quæ in Foſſilium, uti vocant, rerumve, quas Terra intùs in venis incluſas contineat, naturis explicandis verſatur. Viderat ille ex hâc ipſâ Academiâ *Newtonum*, divino planè ingenio hominem, cuncta quæ ſupra ſunt, quæque adſpectabilem Mundi fabricam conſtituunt, ſicuti provinciam ſuam propriam occupâſſe, & accuratè admodum explicuiſſe; Deumque inde Mundi ipſius conditorem, Rectoremque demonſtrâſſe. Noſter igitur, ingenio haud diſpari, eodemque naturæ inveſtigandæ ſtudio incenſus, at contrariâ viâ inſiſtere & ſub terras penetrare cogebatur: Nec minora tamen inde rerum miracula eruit; Diluvium Univerſale; Sacrarum literarum fidem; Deum.

Sic jam duplex quoddam contra Atheos conficitur tandem argumentum; quod, Quercûs ejus Virgilianæ ad inſtar, quantum auras ad æthereas, atque in altum caput attollit, tantum deorſum pariter, atque ipſa in Tartara radicibus tendit.

Sic veterem iſtam Orphei fabellam *Woodwardum* quodammodo egiſſe vidimus; quamque uxoris uſque loco adamaverat, Scientiam quaſi ex inferis evocâſſe.

Dumque *Newtonus* ex Solis naturâ perſpectâ, lucis ſimul naturam explicuit; hic noſter ex caligine ipſâ, mediiſque è tenebris elicuit lucem.

Alii rerum naturalium inveſtigatores Foſſilia iſta non niſi ad corporis curationem uſuſque medicos conquirenda & adhibenda exiſtimârunt: *Woodwardus* autem altiora longè ſapiens, eaque tanquam nobilioris ſtudii inſtrumenta conſiderans, ad animi medicinam cultumque princeps adhibuit. Hâc ſemel cogitatione impulſus nullam ſibi requiem dare potuit, donec omnia, quæ e Terræ viſceribus rariora ubivis gentium effodiantur, infinito ſumptu & labore conquiſiiſſet & in capſulas ſuas condidiſſet. In illâ Arcâ, quicquid India ferè utraque pretioſi habeat, non ad luxum, vitæque delicias; ſed ad animi paſtum, ad ſcientiam repoſitum; in illâ, auri argentique pondus, non ad quæſtum avaritiamque, ſed ad Philoſophiam, ad Naturæ contemplationem reconditum videatis. Hanc enim rerum rariſſimarum collectionem, non oſtentationis aut gloriolæ, ſed argumenti gravis magnique illuſtrandi cauſâ comparaverat; quò Moſaicæ ſcilicet Hiſtoriæ fidem, Diluvii univerſalis veritatem, reſque in eo omnes fuſas quaſi communiter inter ſe & liquefactas oſtenderet: In quâ quidem diſputatione, hæc ille omnis generis Foſſilia, quaſi totidem argumenta & teſtimonia, expoſuit. Quicquid enim in iſtâ Univerſæ Naturæ perturbatione accidiſſe credibile eſt, illud omne ex rebus ipſis ab eo collectis perſpicere jam atque oculis planè intueri licet. Hìc res naturâ & genere diverſiſſimas, animatas cum inanimis, marinas cum terreſtribus confuſas, & in unum corpus conflatas cernimus: quibuſque rebus Natura non niſi imum Oceani fundum, uti nativam ſedem, aſſignâſſet; eas hìc tum ex ſummis montium jugis, tum ex imis ſæpius radicibus effoſſas contemplamur: Hìc tenera plantarum piſciumque corpora in lapidibus jam indureſcentibus inhærentia atque incluſa, formam ſui & effigiem vel duriſſimis ſaxis impreſſiſſe admiramur: Quod fieri quidem omnino potuiſſe, niſi ex Diluvii omnia diſſolventis permiſcentiſque vi, incredibile ſanè videtur.

Hanc autem viri docti ſententiam libri ejus ingenioſè admodum & eruditè conſcripti confirmant: de quibus, cùm diſſertationibus ex hoc ipſo loco habendis materiem ſint aliquando præbituri, nihil jam amplius dicam, quàm quod omnium plauſu excepti, omniumque pæne in linguas converſi, *Woodwardi* nomen per orbem literatum clarum & nobile reddiderunt.

Mihi enim credite, Academici, cùm in exteris gentibus verſarer, plura de hoc uno homine a me fuiſſe quæſita, quàm, *Newtono* excepto, de reliquis fere omnibus Angliæ noſtræ literatis: tanta tum ſcriptorum ejus, tum rerum, quas ex omnibus planè locis coëmerat, fama per cunctas nationes pervaſerat.

Pudet ferè dicere, hunc talem tantumque virum ad illud doctrinæ & virtutis faſtigium propriis viribus & ingenio, abſque hac noſtrâ diſciplinâ pervenire potuiſſe: & ejuſmódi homines, ſi vel numero plures vel temporibus ſæpius exiſterent, vererer profectò, ut Academiæ noſtræ inutiles meritò cenſerentur. Sed rari admodum tam excellenti naturâ, & in ſingulis ætatibus vix ſinguli reperiuntur; atque is ipſe, de quo dicimus, egregiâ ſuâ in hanc Academiam liberalitate, quanto eam Reipublicæ ornamento eſſe cenſuerit, moriens declaravit: Declaravit, inquam, illud ſibi unum ad perfectam laudem defuiſſe; quod ad naturale illud ingenii bonum non inſtitutio etiam Academica acceſſiſſet.

Multos cognovimus, viros quidem bonos & eruditos, qui ita ſeſe literarum ſtudiis abdiderunt, ut nihil inde ad communem hominum fructum offerre potuerint: At *Woodwardus* noſter, cùm vitam civibus ſuis quàm maximè fructuoſam atque utilem degiſſet, eandem quoque curam vel moriens non dimiſit; ſed quò patriæ plurimum etiam in morte prodeſſet, ſtudioſè proſpexit. Hoc conſilio armaria iſta præclara, a curioſis tantopere celebrata, omnique Foſſilium genere referta, immenſam quandam ſtudiorum & ſcientiæ ſupellectilem, nobis teſtamento legavit: quodque in vita cariſſimum habuerat, illud nobis conſervandum, noſtræ fidei ac tutelæ mandandum curavit: Theſaurum, vel Regum gazis anteferendum; quippe qui nec auro redimi, nec pretio comparari, nec niſi ſummo ſtudio & induſtriâ hominis tum eruditi, tum divitis, atque in illo uno & operam & pecuniam etiam omnem collocantis conquiri & colligi poterat. Et quò ad publicos demum uſus, quibus ille unicè ſtuduerat, promptior paratiorque hic rerum theſaurus eſſet; Cuſtodem ei atque Interpretem, qui Foſſilium præcipuè ſcientiam Juventuti Academicæ explicaret, ſtipendio amplo & liberali inſtructum conſtituit.

Hoc quàm præclarum Academiæ noſtræ ornamentum, quod in nullâ aliâ Academiâ reperitur? Quàm præclarum pariter de diſciplinâ noſtrâ ac virtute teſtimonium, quod *Woodwardi* judicio graviſſimo confirmatur? Nos enim ille optimos ſcientiarum cuſtodes; Religionis propugnatores; Moſis defenſores, ſuâ certè ſententiâ declaravit, qui noſtras potiſſimum in manus defenſionis ejus inſtrumenta tradenda eſſe voluit. Nec honorificè minus de nobis etiam exteri exiſtimabunt, cùm *Woodwardum* audierint, nos rerum ſibi cariſſimarum conſervatores, famæ & nominis tutores, bonorum hæredes delegiſſe.

Noſtrum modò erit, Academici, hominis tantopere de nobis meriti judicio ſervire, voluntati obtemperare, hominumque expectationi ſatisfacere. Ut *Woodwardo* enim glorioſum fuit, tantam nobis eruditionis materiem comparâſſe ac reliquiſſe; ſic nobis ſanè turpiſſimum erit, quod ab alterius virtute accepimus, illud noſtrâ ornare ac tueri non poſſe. Sed meliora de vobis augurari licet; ex hoc enim tam celebri ordinum omnium concurſu ſtudium planè veſtrum ardoremque agnoſco; agnoſco, inquam, verum illud Athenienſium veterum ingenium, novi ſemper aliquid cognoſcendi audiendique avidum.

Animos hominum, cùm e corporibus exceſſerint, remanere tamen & æternos eſſe, magnum ex illo argumentum petiere veteres, quod optimum quemque, immortalitatis amore flagrantem, futura ſemper proſpicere, & poſteritati maximè ſervire vidiſſent: Naturâ quaſi ex optimis iſtis ingeniis ſignificante, eſſe aliquid, quod ad nos etiam poſt mortem pertineat. Et Tu quoque, Præſtantiſſime *Woodwarde*, novum quoddam huic argumento, nec leve illud quidem, tuæ auctoritatis pondus adjeciſti; quem eâdem viâ, ac veteres illos Heroas, poſteritati ſerviendo, hominesque juvando ad cœlum atque immortalitatem contendiſſe vidimus. Et dum beatorum in ſedibus debita virtuti tuæ præmia percipis; ſi quis in mortuis reſideat rerum humanarum ſenſus, ad gaudia iſta, quibus jam perfrueris, hoc certè, quaſi cumulus quidam, accedet, quòd quæ in publica patriæ commoda tantâ cum ſapientiâ excogitâras, effectum jam ſuum obtinere, atque ad exitum perduci ſentias: Quod hanc optimorum juvenum frequentiam, hunc doctiſſimorum hominum cœtum, Tui nominis auctoritate, Tuique imitatione excitatum, ad virtutem arteſque bonas propagandas tanto ſtudio conveniſſe videas.

Quæ verò, Academici, de *Woodwardo* dixi, ſiquis me glorioſè nimis & adulatoriè dixiſſe arbitretur, propterea quod in virtutibus ejus celebrandis de vitiis prorſus tacuerim; is de mortuo me loqui meminerit. Vitia eum habuiſſe fatendum eſt; quibus neminem unquam mortalium caruiſſe cognovimus; illa verò cùm in vitâ virtutum ſplendore obruerentur, poſt mortem ſanè obliterari penitus debent. Nam ſi de mortuis, uti aiunt, nil niſi bonum; de eo certè nihil aliud prædicandum, a cujus vel mortui liberalitate hæc tanta beneficia accepimus; de eo, inquam, qui non benignitati ſuæ eoſdem ac vitæ terminos eſſe voluit; neque mortem ipſam benefaciendi ſibi poteſtatem præripere paſſus eſt.

Sed de mortuo hactenus: Ad vivos jam ſeſe conferat Oratio.

Fruſtra enim tali erga nos animo; fruſtra tantâ in hanc Academiam benevolentiâ fuiſſet *Woodwardus*; ni alios etiam ſui ſimiles, eodem animo, eâdem benevolentiâ poſt ſe reliquiſſet, Teſtamenti hæredes, voluntatis exequendæ curatores. Fruſtra, inquam, hæc tam liberaliter tum in nos tum in patriam ipſam conſilia ſuſcepiſſet, ni alios vivus delegiſſet, qui ſe mortuo conſiliis ſuis vim effectumque darent, nec ſpes quidem eum, opinioque de hominibus concepta fefellit. Illi enim, quod traditum ſibi commiſſumque habuerant, magno licèt cum labore & moleſtiâ conjunctum, ſummâ in mortuum pietate, ſummâ in nos benignitate, ſummâ fide ac diligentiâ abſolverunt, & ad finem tandem deſtinatum perduxerunt. Hos igitur viros, officii licèt conſcientiâ contentos, nec laudem ullam plauſumve captantes, at noſtrâ, at virtutis ipſius cauſâ cum honore nominare, debitiſque laudibus celebrare debemus.

Imprimis igitur honoris gratiâ commemorandus vir Prænobilis & Honoratus *Dixieus Windſor*; non tam nobilitate, quâ tamen maximâ floret, quàm virtute propriâ conſpicuus: quem in hac Muſarum ſede multos annos ita verſantem vidimus, ut Nobilibus, modeſtiæ, humanitatis, facilitatis, & vel Infimis, diligentiæ, officii, legumque noſtrarum obſervantiæ exemplum ſemper proponeretur. Ad publicum autem Britanniæ Concilium miſſus ab hoc municipio, per annos pluſquam viginti Legatus, tum in Academiæ, tum in univerſi populi negotiis commodiſque tuendis eam fidem, gravitatem, conſtantiam adhibuit, ut non apud nos ſolum, ſed per Angliam totam fama ejus clara & illuſtris pervagaret. *Woodwardo* igitur de Cantabrigia noſtra ac Patria ſimul ornanda cogitanti, Hunc certè hominem ſi non privata amicitia, at publica civium vox auctoritaſque ſocium adjutoremque dediſſent.

Præfuit ſimul huic negotio vir illuſtris & liberalis *Hugo Bethel*; qui in exteras terras proficiſcendo, varioſque hominum mores contemplando, ea prudentiæ & humanitatis fundamenta jecit; ea generoſæ indolis ornamenta domum reduxit; ut Civem ſeſe egregium, Patriæ amantem, communis libertatis vindicem in Senatu etiam Britannico cum magna ſua laude præſtiterit. Hunc igitur virum tantis & animi, & fortunæ bonis inſtructum; fide præſtantem; literis politioribus ornatum; in Academia augenda, Artiumque ſtudiis promovendis, meritò ſibi *Woodwardus* Conſiliarium eſſe voluit.

Eodem etiam nomine celebrandus, vir itidem ingenuus, ingenuiſque artibus præditus, *Richardus Graham*; qui hujus olim Academiæ alumnus, nihil ſibi unquam antiquius, nihil magis in votis habuit, quàm quò in Almam Matrem filium ſeſe pium gratumque oſtenderet; itaque non in mortui ſolùm voluntate exequenda fidum eum ac diligentem, ſed viventi etiam *Woodwardo* auctorem hortatoremque aſſiduum cognovi, ut eam omnino voluntatem ſuſciperet; utque eximiam illam rerum ſuarum collectionem in hac potiſſimum Academia, tanquam in loco maximè conſpicuo dignoque, collocaret.

Poſtremò non minori tamen cum laude nominandus *Richardus King*; qui miles licèt, & in armis enutritus, in quibus Tribunatûs honorem peradoleſcens meruerat, ita tamen Muſis, ſtudiiſque humanioribus deditus eſt, ut miſeram luminum orbitatem, quam in expeditione olim pro patria ſuſcepta paſſus erat, his jam unicè ſuſtentet. In hoc autem munere inſtituendo, hæc ei propria quædam, & præcipua laus debetur, quòd cum ſuo ipſius damno virum ſeſe bonum atque Academiæ noſtræ amantem oſtenderit; quòd officium lucro, pietatem quæſtui antepoſuerit: cùm enim a *Woodwardo*, cui omnium amicitia conjunctiſſimus vixerat, bonorum, ſiquid reſidui eſſet fructuumque intermediorum hæres is ſolus inſtitueretur; at quanto magis ex rei conficiendæ mora fructus ſibi accreſcerent, tanto ille diligentiùs rem ipſam conficiendam, & ad exitum perducendam curavit: &, quaſi cavendum ſibi ſtatuiſſet, ne quidquam omnino præter amicitiæ cariſſimæ memoriam ex Hæreditate iſta ad ſe perveniret, ſepulchrum

Amico mortuo marmoreum ſplendidumque proprio conſilio propriiſque ſumptibus exſtrui, ac in Templo Weſtmonaſterienſi collocari juſſit.

Hoc igitur *Woodwardi* noſtri prudentiæ & judicii perpetuum certè ſpecimen extabit; quod tales ſibi viros ad conſilia ſua exequenda delegerit, quos vel mortuo fidem perſoluturos cognovit: hoc perpetuum pariter illorum virtutis, & integritatis teſtimonium; quod tam religioſè opinioni ejus reſponderint, fidem abſolverint. Illi igitur poſt *Woodwardum*, ad ſempiternam rei memoriam in Annalibus noſtris inſcribantur, Academiæ hujus Fautores, Amici, Patroni.

Me verò quod attinet, Academici, ipſe nonnullis Fortunæ procellis jactatus, in hoc Academiæ otio, tanquam in portu, tutum ſemper atque honeſtum ſimul perfugium inveni: Vos enim, cum certorum hominum invidia indignè olim vexarer, novum in hac Academia Protobibliothecarii munus eodem decreto inſtituiſtis, & ad me detuliſtis: publico illo judicii veſtri teſtimonio ſignificantes, & quid de me judicaretis & quid aliis etiam judicandum præſcriberetis. Jam verò veſtra auctoritas quàm latè pateat videtis: quippe digniſſimi illi *Woodwardi* Hæredes, veſtro exemplo commoti, veſtrumque factum imitati, novum hocce Phyſicæ explicandæ munus haud citius ex *Woodwardi* teſtamento conſtituendum, quàm ad me ultrò deferendum curârunt.

Utinam modò Munus ipſum vel perſonæ ſtudiiſque meis accommodatius, vel ipſe tali ingenio eſſem ut ad quælibet facilè ſtudia meipſum accommodare & convertere poſſem: quicquid autem in me ingenii fuerit, illud omne in hac, quam nactus ſum, provincia ordanda & tuenda me collocaturum polliceor: quam quidem ſi aut viribus majorem aut vitæ rationi moleſtam demum reperiam, deponere ſtatim atque alteri tradere ſtatui: in hoc interea uno felix, mihique gratulans, quòd hac occaſione oblata, tum Celeberrimo *Woodwardo*, tum clariſſimis viris Hæredibus ejus, pro ſummis eorum erga nos meritis, proque ea, quæ mihi præcipuè cum ſingulis interceſſit, amicitia; tum Almæ denique Matri, cujus amplitudinem, ſplendorem, dignitatem omnibus meis commodis antepono, hoc animi pii gratique officium, hoc, quantulumcunque eſt, laudis verè meritæ præconium, mihi publicè præſtare ac perſolvere contigit.

FINIS.